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1910

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HON. DAVID ELLICOTT EVANS.

FROM AN OIL PORTRAIT IN THE POSSESSION OF MR. SPALDING EVANS, LOCKPORT.

THE
HOLLAND LAND CO.

AND CANAL CONSTRUCTION
IN WESTERN NEW YORK

BUFFALO-BLACK ROCK
HARBOR PAPERS

JOURNALS AND DOCUMENTS



BUFFALO, NEW YORK:
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INTRODUCTION

The present volume consists chiefly of documents bearing on the original construction of the Erie canal in Western New York, and on the early harbor work at Buffalo and Black Rock. There are also here printed two journals of travel in New York State in the early years of the canal; a valuable study of the influence of the Erie canal on the settlement of the West; and sundry other papers which, although perhaps of minor importance, find an appropriate place in this collection.

Of the principal feature of the volume—the Holland Land Company correspondence—it is sufficient to remind the reader that what is here printed are but a few letters drawn from a vast mass of documents in the possession of this Society, relating to the Holland Land Company. Selection has been made of such letters as appear important in connection with the history of canal construction. To them have been added other letters on the same general subject, forming a part of a valuable manuscript collection, the correspondence of David E. Evans, now owned by the estate of the late Charles W. Evans. The documents drawn from this latter source are marked in the following pages, "Evans MSS." By combining the material from these two collections, the Historical Society is fortunately enabled to present a remarkably full documentary history of the negotiations between the Holland Land Company, the State, and local officials in Western New York, regarding the canal. Most of the letters have never before been printed.

Of Mr. Ellicott's share in this work, it is impossible to speak in a prefatory note with adequate fullness. In some subsequent volume of these Publications, ample space must be devoted to his part in the history-making of Western New York, and especially of Buffalo. The only noteworthy attempt that has ever been made to record his work, is Turner's "History of the Holland Purchase," a volume which, although valuable as a repository of facts, is far from being a satisfactory narrative of the subject. From the sources which the Historical Society has at command, much of importance may be drawn touching the whole term of Mr. Ellicott's activity. This material will fill a gap in the printed annals of Western New York. These, however, are matters for a future volume.

The present collection is limited to such correspondence as bears upon canal and harbor work. A perusal of the letters will suggest to the reader much of interest regarding the personality of the men who wrote. Perhaps most striking of all is the conservatism and doubting attitude of Mr. Busti. He refused to believe that the canal would ever be built, until its actual construction compelled him to acknowledge his error. That he was not alone in his doubts, is realized by any one conversant with the canal construction period. The canal was declared impracticable and its construction unwise, if not impossible, by many a man in public life. So judicious an observer as John Melish, traveler and author, wrote, after his inspection of the territory through which the canal was proposed to be built: "My candid opinion was that there would probably be no grand canal." And this in reference, not to Western New York, but to the vicinity of Utica.

Mr. Ellicott himself, in the earlier years, does not appear to have been very sanguine of the success of the enterprise. His association, however, with DeWitt Clinton, his participation in canal work as commissioner, and his close contact with the people of the Western district, undoubtedly greatly modified his views, so that he appears in the main as a believer in the canal, which he foresaw was bound greatly to benefit his company by promoting the sale of lands.

Mr. Ellicott retired from the office of land agent for the Holland Company in October, 1821. Most of his letters in the following collection were written prior to that date. One long communication, however, dated at Batavia, July 16, 1824, relates to the Buffalo harbor construction and gave to the Board of Canal Commissioners the intimate information which he had in regard to local conditions; but when he wrote it he was no longer acting for the Holland Company.

Next to Mr. Ellicott, in the importance of their services rendered to the infant Buffalo, were William Peacock and David E. Evans.

William Peacock was born February 22, 1780, near New York City. He first visited the site of Buffalo in 1799. In 1803, he entered the service of the Holland Land Company at Batavia. In that and the following year, as surveyor, he laid out a considerable part of the village of Buffalo. On October 3, 1807, he married Alice Evans, daughter of Joseph and Ann (Ellicott) Evans. In 1810 he removed to Mayville; he was later made a Judge of Chautauqua county, with which community the activities of his later years are mainly associated. He it was who in 1818, made the first thorough survey of Buffalo harbor—an epoch-marking achievement in our

history. His report on that survey is given in the present volume; and also a most interesting portrait of him, of about the same period.

David E. Evans, author of several of the letters here printed, and to whom numerous others of the collection were written, was Joseph Ellicott's nephew. In 1803, when only fifteen years old, he left his Maryland home for Batavia, where he became a clerk in the land office. He later became accounting clerk. On September 11, 1824, Joseph Ellicott gave him a general power of attorney to transact all his business. Mr. Ellicott was succeeded as resident agent of the land company by Jacob S. Otto. Mr. Otto died May 2, 1827, and Mr. Evans succeeded him, discharging the duties of that office until 1837. It is stated that under his administration nearly one-half of all the lands ever owned by the company in Western New York were sold, and the receipts of the company were greater than all the receipts under the agencies of Mr. Ellicott and Mr. Otto together. Mr. Evans held various offices of trust and distinction. Elected to the New York State Senate in 1818 as a Clintonian Republican, he later became politically opposed to DeWitt Clinton, and an adherent of Mr. VanBuren. Mr. Evans represented the "Western District" in the State Senate until 1822. In 1824 he became a director of the Ontario Bank at Canandaigua; and of the Western Insurance Company. He was also, at a later period, a director of the Bank of Genesee, at Batavia, and of the United States Branch Bank, in Buffalo. He was one of the commissioners under an Act of the New York Legislature for granting relief to the sufferers on the Niagara frontier, whose property had been destroyed by the enemy during the War of 1812. In 1826 he was elected Representative in Congress from the 29th New York district, but in May of the following year resigned his seat, to take up his duties as local agent of the Holland Land Company. He married Lucy Grant of Batavia, September 3, 1816; and in Batavia he died, May 17, 1850.

Although much is said in the correspondence regarding the terms of the land company's grant to the State, the final outcome is not clearly shown. For the precise terms and conditions of the grant, the reader is referred to the Act of April 13, 1819. ("Canal Laws," vol. 1, p. 435.) The State accepted the grant of 100,632 acres in Catteraugus county; of this tract, lands remaining unsold in 1842 were to revert to the Holland Land Co.

Acknowledgment is gratefully made to Dr. and Mrs. G. Hunter Bartlett of Buffalo, in behalf of the Evans estate, for their kind assistance, and courtesy in placing at the service of the editor portraits of Mr. Evans and Judge Peacock, and the Evans manuscripts, which are a part of the collection of the late Charles W. Evans, for many

years prominent in the business life of Buffalo. He was a son of William Evans, and a grandson of Letitia Ellicott, a sister of Joseph Ellicott. David Ellicott Evans, whose letters are here printed, was, as above stated, a nephew of Joseph Ellicott, the son of his sister Rachel (Ellicott) Evans.

The admirable paper by Dr. Lois K. Mathews, on "The Erie Canal and the Settlement of the West," and the journals of Col. William L. Stone and Judge George W. Clinton, are sufficiently commented on in notes accompanying them. The reader will bear in mind that the Clinton journal was written by a mere youth, whereas the portrait accompanying is of Judge Clinton in his last years, showing him as he will still be recalled by many of his former neighbors and friends. No youthful portrait of him was available.

Much relevant matter, bearing on the general subject of canals, is perforce omitted from our collection; among other papers, which it was proposed to publish, an historical sketch of the use of steam on the New York canals; a study of the Niagara ship-canal projects; and especially a bibliographical, annotated list of publications relating to New York canals. Such a list has in fact been prepared, based on the large collection of canal material in the library of the Buffalo Historical Society. Its great length—it would make a fair-sized volume—precludes its inclusion in our present issue. Since its preparation was begun, its usefulness has been somewhat forestalled by the appearance of the canal bibliography accompanying Noble E. Whitford's "History of the Canal System of the State of New York," published as a supplement to the annual report of the N. Y. State Engineer and Surveyor, 1906. Its publication by this society becomes, therefore, for the present at least, inadvisable.

It may be well to remind the reader that in the printing of documents, the peculiarities of the original, as regards spelling, punctuation, etc., are retained, unless a change has been necessary to bring out the meaning. Words in brackets are added by the editor. There are sundry references to maps and plans, but these are missing from the collection to which these documents belong.

The "Blockley's Retreat," from which Mr. Busti's letter of May 17, 1811 (p. 19) was written, was a farm comprised at a later period in the grounds of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, in Philadelphia; the house Mr. Busti occupied was afterwards for a long time the residence of the hospital superintendent, Dr. Kirkbride.

The letters between Mr. Ellicott and Mr. Clinton, Feb. 21-27, 1816 (pp. 48-50), relate to the canal movement in Buffalo of that time, regarding which the reader is referred to volume xiii of this series, pp. 211-213.

In volume xiii, the sketch of Canvass White should have been credited to the late Charles B. Stuart, and not to Wm. Pierrepont White. Mr. White courteously furnished it to the editor, and was erroneously supposed to have been its author.

Certain criticisms contained in reviews of recent volumes of this series, indicate that the writers regard the Buffalo Historical Society as engaged in a canal propaganda. Nothing could be further from the fact. Our main purpose in these Publications is to collect and preserve important material for history; and had we at hand a collection of anti-canal documents of undoubted value, we would regard their publication fully as desirable as is that of the pro-canal material. Senator Hill's canal history (volume xii) was avowedly the work of a canal advocate. The story of canal accomplishment was bound to be. But neither his views, nor the fact that he has borne an active part in shaping the present canal policy of the State, affects in the least the unbiased course pursued in the preparation of our Publications. With each new volume we are adding to the store of trustworthy data relating in the main to the history of Western New York. The fourteen volumes now issued are unrivaled and unique as a repository for the student of that history. Although, as above indicated, much material is at hand bearing on the same general subjects as our recent volumes, we now turn, for the present, from this phase of Western New York history. Volume Fifteen of the series, now in preparation, will be of a radically different character than its immediate predecessors, but we trust no less useful or attractive.

F. H. S.

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THE
HOLLAND LAND CO.

AND CANAL CONSTRUCTION IN
WESTERN NEW YORK

CORRESPONDENCE NOW FIRST PUBLISHED


THE HOLLAND LAND COMPANY

AND CANAL CONSTRUCTION IN WESTERN
NEW YORK

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THE STATE SURVEYOR SEEKS JOS. ELLICOTT'S ADVICE.

ALBANY, 13th June, 1808.

DEAR SIR: You may have heard that our Legislature have directed the Surveyor-General to explore, survey, level, etc., and report the best route for inland navigation by canals between the waters of the Hudson and Lake Erie, and have authorized him to expend  \$600 in that business! Hence you will naturally suppose that it was expected that something would be done for nothing, or that a good deal of what ought to be done must be left undone. Thus restricted I shall endeavor to have the level taken on the best route between Oneida lake and Lake Ontario, and if my \$600 will hold out, I will have also something done along Niagara river.

There are some gentlemen whose thoughts on such a matter are entitled to respect, who are of opinion that nothing less ought to be contemplated than a navigation from Erie, or some part of the Niagara river to the waters

1. The following letters, which illustrate the attitude of the Holland Land Company toward the original canal construction in Western New York, are here printed from the originals, or the original letter-book copies, in the possession of the Buffalo Historical Society; and from a valuable MS. collection, the correspondence of David E. Evans, courteously placed at the service of the editor by the owner, Mrs. G. Hunter Bartlett of Buffalo. Documents copied from this collection are in the following pages marked "Evans MSS." For further notes on the sources and nature of these important documents, the reader is referred to the Introduction of this volume.

of the Oneida lake, by a route south of Lake Ontario, and my object in writing to you, is to obtain your opinion about it. Some mention the route of the Tonnewanta, others suppose a level might be found along the declivity which originally formed the Niagara and the Genesee Falls, so as to fall in with the Mud creek. The surveys which you possess, must enable you better than any other person, to form a judgment of the practicability of the project. Will you have the goodness to give me your opinion? Perhaps you may possess information to give me something in a detailed way on the subject, which I might annex to my report I am to make for the use of the U. S. Government, for the purpose of showing the feasibility of such a canal. Perhaps further you may think yourself authorized to be at some expense for promoting the interest of the Company for which you act, by causing some examination to be made of particular places. The step which the State has taken was in consequence of suggestions that the General Government contemplated the execution of such a work, and that it might be accelerated by furnishing the information which has been directed to be procured. Should such a thing be brought about, the Holland Company will doubtless be much benefited by it.

In a few days from this I purpose to leave this for New York, and expect to be absent till the beginning of August. On my return I hope to be favored with a line from you on this subject.

I am, your ob't Serv't

S. DEWITT

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

MR. ELLICOTT'S REPLY.

[BATAVIA, July 30, 1808]

SIMEON DEWITT, *Esquire*, Albany.

DEAR SIR: I herewith acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th of June ult. on the subject of canals and inland lock navigation, to connect the waters of Lake Erie

and the Hudson River, in which you have requested me to furnish you with such information as I may possess on the subject, together with my opinion of the most eligible route for the canal. This task I shall perform with pleasure, because, I consider it an object of vast importance to the United States, and which may be effected with a small expense, comparatively speaking, when contrasted with the immense advantages and utility that will be derived to all that tract of country bordering on the Great Lakes. I shall consider this subject under the following heads.

First, In regard to the route along the declivity that originally it is supposed, formed the great falls of Niagara, to Mud Creek.

Second, In regard to the route down the Niagara river to Lake Ontario, and from thence to the Oneida Lake, and Thirdly, The Tonnawanta route to Mud Creek.

In exhibiting my ideas to you, I find it necessary to accompany them with a map or plan of the route I deem most eligible by way of reference, which I enclose herewith.

In respect to the route along the declivity that is supposed originally formed the great falls of Niagara, to Mud Creek, I shall not advocate [it], as I consider that it would be attended with almost innumerable difficulties: the face of the declivity being in many places cut into ravines, or deep chasms of various breadths, formed apparently by the streams of water running off the summit into the vale below.

To carry a canal in this direction would require an aqueduct bridge for each ravine or chasm from 40 to 90 feet of perpendicular height. There are however many places between the Niagara and Genesee river, where the declivity does not assume a regular slope, being divided into ridges running in every direction, in such a manner that it is difficult to ascertain the main declivity, or precisely its summit, and even the latter is hilly and uneven. However, all parts of the slope which I have seen, where it assumes a regular shape, it is a complete wall of horizontal stratum of rocks. The base of the declivity is composed principally of freestone, the summit limestone, and the intermediate

part of granite. Hence should the canal be carried in this direction, it would be necessary to excavate a portion of it out of a mass of granite rock. Add to this a number of aqueduct bridges, which would require to be erected in order to carry the water over the ravines and chasms formed upon the sides of the declivity, and it would become necessary to pass through many rocky ridges of various heights, which obstructions, together with those previously mentioned, appear to me to render this route almost impracticable. I shall therefore not undertake to make an estimate of the expense that would attend the excavation of a canal in that direction.

I shall next proceed to an examination of the route for a canal down the Niagara river from Lake Erie to Ontario, and make an estimate of the probable expense attending the formation of a canal, that route, projected upon a scale of 33 feet in breadth at the surface of the water in the canal, and 4 1-2 feet in depth, which will be sufficient for boats carrying 20 tons.

From Schlosser to Lewiston, the distance will be about 10 miles; and from Lake Ontario to the Oneida Lake, the distance I presume would be about 30 miles; making in the whole about 40 miles. I shall not undertake to make an estimate of the expense attending canaling from Lake Ontario to the Oneida Lake, being unacquainted with that route, having only once passed from the Three River point down the Oswego river to Lake Ontario. To the best of my recollection, however, for the greater part of this distance the bed of the river consisted of horizontal strata of rocks, and this appears to be their uniform position through the whole extent of the Western Country. From Schlosser to Lewiston, parts which I have frequently explored in every direction, I am enabled to judge pretty accurately of the nature of the country; and I am decidedly of the opinion that the expense attending the formation of a canal and its locks on this route of sufficient magnitude to admit the passage of boats of 20 tons burden, would require an expense much greater than to excavate a canal from the mouth of Tonnawanta Creek to the Onondaga

river. In support of this opinion I shall proceed to enumerate some of the principal obstructions that will militate against the execution of a canal in this quarter.

In the first place I shall observe, that at the commencement of this work at Schlosser, it will be necessary to excavate the solid rock, which from all observations I have made, ascends gradually to the summit of the declivity above Lewiston, which we supposed originally formed the great falls of Niagara. This fact indeed was ascertained by a person employed by the Holland Company in 1798, who actually made a survey and drew a plan for a canal and locks from Schlosser to Lewiston, and in order to ascertain the nature of the earth and rock through which the canal would pass, he caused holes to be dug in the path laid off for the canal to the stratum of rock I have mentioned. By these experiments it was found that the strata of rock actually ascended as he progressed northwardly, and he was of the opinion, if I recollect rightly, that these strata of the summit of the declivity were elevated above the level of the water at Schlosser, at least from 30 to 40 feet of perpendicular height. This fact is also proved by the current in Gill Creek, which runs directly opposite to the course of the Niagara river. We will however admit, that it does not exceed 30 feet which will make an average depth of 15 feet to be excavated through the solid rock, to which if we add 4 1-2 feet, the depth of the canal below the surface of the water at Schlosser, it will make the whole depth to be excavated through the solid rock of 19 feet 6 inches. Independent of this, there are in some places, rises in the surface of the country, between the summit of the declivity and Schlosser from 15 to 20 feet. Hence it is evident, that it would become necessary to excavate part of this canal from 30 to 40 feet in depth through loam and rocks.

When we reflect for a moment on the vast difference in expense attending the excavation of a canal through solid rock and one through clay and loam only, we shall find that a canal may be cut through the latter of the same extent, for less than one twentieth part of the expense. For in-

stance, it will on an average require a man from 2 to 3 hours to drill 18 inches into a rock, and by the period the charge can be made, the rock blasted, and the fragments removed, full four hours for one man will have elapsed; and on an average the cavity made by the blast will not exceed a cube of 18 inches; while the same man in the same period, would with a pick and a spade, in clay or loam only, have removed nearly one cord of earth; making a cavity of at least 30 times the extent.

We will however admit, that one man will be able to excavate the one twentieth part as much rock as he could of earth in the same time, (which in fact is not admissible;) it is evident that by the period a canal could be cut round the great falls of Niagara, a canal of equal dimensions might be cut at least twenty times that distance through clay or loam. Upon these data I shall venture to estimate the probable expense of canaling round the great falls of Niagara from Schlosser to Lewiston, and admit that the average depth of rock from Schlosser to Lewiston shall not exceed 16 feet; distance 10 miles.

The price given in this place for excavating cellars, mill races, &c., is 75 cents per cord through clay, or loam; the undertaker finding himself provisions, tools, &c. Hence to excavate one cord of rock would amount to twenty times the expense, more especially if we take into the calculation the expense of powder, smith's work, in repairing tools, &c., which would be equal to 15 dollars for each cord of rock so excavated, and each mile of canal excavated through rock 16 feet in depth and 33 feet in breadth will contain 21760 cords, of course 10 miles of such canal, will contain 217600 cords, which multiplied by \$15, the expense of excavating one cord, will amount to the sum of \$3,264,000, exclusive of the expense of removing the clay and loam above the rock. In the above estimate we have not taken into consideration the multiplicity, strength and magnitude of locks that would be requisite to admit the passage of boats down the great declivity at Lewiston, a depth of at least 280 feet, as well as on the Oswego river, where the descent is also very considerable; and in this estimate we

have considered the strata of rocks on the Niagara river, which are composed of flint and limestone to be of such a uniform solidity as to be capable of being blown to the greatest advantage. Whereas, it is found that the rock is so full of small crevices running in horizontal directions that the force of gunpowder is exhausted upon it without producing much effect, which would also tend to retard the prosecution of the work. It may however be said, that a canal of that magnitude would not be required, and that one of half the breadth I have proposed would be sufficient. If this should be admitted the expense of such a canal could not be less than one half the sum I have estimated, which would amount to \$1,632,000, exclusive of the expense attending the cutting a canal from Lake Ontario to the Oneida Lake.

The most practicable and useful path for the canal, in my opinion, would be the Tonnawanta route to Mud Creek. The mouth of the Tonnawanta affords a commodious harbor, either for the largest vessels that navigate all the upper lakes, or for such boats as would be made use of for navigating the canal. The tract of country that it would pass through, from Niagara river to the Genesee river, is probably, the most level, even and horizontal, of any other tract of equal extent, in the United States; and I am persuaded, that it would not be necessary to deviate much, on account of either ridges or rocks, but that the canal might be actually excavated, nearly as straight, as the delineation exhibited by the enclosed plan. As however, the comparative advantages of the route I have recommended, may be questioned, it may perhaps be necessary to give a short sketch of the nature of the tract of country I have proposed for this important communication. It will be observed on inspecting the map of the country, between the Niagara and Genesee river, that in the proposed rout, the different streams of Tonnawanta, Oak Orchard, and Black creek, where it will be necessary to direct the canal, run in the same latitudinal direction; the cause of which is owing to the circumstance of these waters being confined between two terraces, supported by horizontal strata of rocks. The

first, or northern terrace extends across the Niagara river, above Lewiston, forming the great falls of Niagara, and extending eastwardly, also forming the falls on the Oak Orchard creek, Genesee river, Gerundegut, Oswego, &c. The second or southern terrace, crosses the Niagara river at Black Rock, forming the rapids at the outlet of Lake Erie, and extends eastwardly, forming falls on the Four Mile creek, Ellicott's creek, Sulphur creek, Tonnawanta creek, Chiccaungie¹ creek, Allens creek, Honeyoi creek, Mud creek, Seneca falls, on the outlet of Seneca lake, &c. The district of country lying between these terraces from Niagara to Genesee river, is almost a horizontal level, and from the appearance of the beds of the different streams of water, as far as they pass through this tract of country, I am led to believe that it is entirely free from ledges of rocks or stone; these water courses being deep, without even a stone to ruffle their current as far as they are confined to the valley.

The depth of water in the mouth of Tonnawanta creek is from 26 to 30 feet; whereas, the Niagara river, a little to the north of Navy island, may be fathomed with a 10 or 12 feet pole; the bottom of the river being a horizontal stratum of rocks, extending eastward, which I believe to be the southern extremity of the lower, or northern terrace of horizontal strata of rocks. It will also be observed, that where the Four Mile creek empties into the Niagara river, below Black Rock, the mouth of the creek is from 15 to 18 feet in depth. Hence, I conclude, that the northern extremity of the upper, or southern terrace of horizontal strata of rocks, terminates near the mouth of this creek, leaving a tract or valley of country extending eastwardly to the Genesee river, between these terraces, from north to south of from 7 to 10, and 12 miles in breadth, entirely free from ledges of rocks or stone; and I have always

1. Apparently either Bigelow or Black creek, as known today. Sulphur creek, on the early H. L. Co.'s maps, coincides with present Bower creek, emptying into the Tonawanda near East Pembroke. Allen's creek should be spelled "Allan's," but seldom is—taking its name from Ebenezer ("Indian") Allan. "Gerundegut" is one of many forms given in early documents to the modern "Irondequoit." "Honeyoi" is the Honeoye of today.

been led to believe from the knowledge I possess of this part of the state, that the same disposition of country prevails from the Genesee river to the Onondaga river, which for a considerable portion of that distance is equally as horizontal, and as free from ledges of rocks and stones, as the tract of country between the Niagara and Genesee rivers. Mud creek, part of the Onondaga river, and the Oneida lake, all lying in the same latitudinal direction, and probably between the same terraces of horizontal strata of rocks.

The tract of country extending from the Niagara to the Genesee river, along the path I have marked for the canal, may be considered a valley for the whole distance, the country gradually rising to the southward, and also to the northward, until we arrive at the declivity, or descent that is supposed originally formed the great falls of Niagara. It is the opinion of many that at some remote Period the waters from the Niagara River flowed along this valley to the Eastward and that part of the Waters of Lake Erie were disembogued down the Cataract formed by Oak Orchard Creek, as well as that of the Genesee River by the way of Black Creek until the Bed of Niagara River became so much deepened as to discharge all the Water through its channel. These are, however, but speculative opinions, which I only mention to evince that this Tract of Country is remarkable for its horizontal position.

I profess to have a pretty accurate knowledge of this tract of country, as far as it extends through the Holland Purchase, both from observation and from the surveys and allotments we have made; and it appears to me, that nature seems to have pointed out this route for a canal, not only in consequence of the little labor, comparatively speaking, that would be required in digging it, but because the necessary materials for the construction of locks are close at hand. Oak Orchard creek is navigable for large boats from where it would be intersected by the canal, to the horizontal stratum of rocks that form its first cataract, being as is supposed the same stratum that forms the falls of Niagara and Genesee. At this place any quantity of the best

shaped limestone may be procured, lying in horizontal strata of almost any superficial dimensions, and from 5, 10 and 12 inches in thickness, which might be conveyed from thence in boats for the construction of locks or other purposes: and indeed almost every where as far as the Canal would extend through the Holland Purchase, a little to the Northward of the rout I have laid down, stone of the same kind may be obtained, and also at the Genesee River at the upper cataract.

The number of Locks that might be required between the Niagara and Genesee River I have not the requisite Information to ascertain; not knowing the Difference in elevation of the beds of the respective Rivers Niagara and Genesee above the level of the water in Lake Ontario, or how much Oak Orchard Creek, where it would be intersected by this Canal is elevated above the beds of either Niagara or Genesee Rivers. I am however clearly of the opinion that Oak Orchard Creek may be considered the Crown level, as it meanders through the same piece of low land or swamp (called Tonawonta Swamp) from which Tonawonta & Black Creek receive part of their waters, as will be observed by the Map herewith forwarded. And here I cannot omit mentioning a remarkable Fact relative to this Valley of Country, which is that in the early part of the Spring season on the dissolving of the snow, when all the low lands are covered with waters, if it were not for the obstruction of Bushes and fallen Timber, a Canoe might be navigated from the Niagara River up the waters of Tonawonta Creek by the way of Oak Orchard & Black Creek to the Genesee river, being the same path I have delineated on the enclosed plan for this Canal. This circumstance, together with other observations I have made upon the horizontal formation of the country along the path I have delineated, induces me to believe that at most 2 locks at A with each 8 or 9 feet lifts would be sufficient to navigate the Canal, and that there would be no other lock required until the Canal began to descend Black Creek and from the best information I can obtain 6 locks, each 8 or 10 Feet Lifts would be found sufficient to navigate a Boat

from thence to the navigable waters of Black Creek communicating with the Genesee River.

Another advantage of an important nature that the route possesses, is the great facility with which the canal might be supplied with water for the consumption of the locks. Oak Orchard creek which is sufficiently large in the driest season for turning an undershot mill, will intersect the canal on the crown level. Tonnawanta and Allen's creek, both of which take their rise above the upper or southern terrace, may be conveyed to this canal, at a small expence, and Tonnawanta in particular, in several places, at an expence less than \$3000. There are also many small streams and brooks that flow in the valley both from north and south of the canal as delineated, which might be used if necessary for that purpose.

Having thus given you a short sketch of the information of the tract of country I have proposed for this canal to pass thro', I shall proceed to estimate the expence of excavating it from the navigable waters communicating with Niagara river to the navigable waters communicating with the Genesee river, upon the same scale or magnitude I have estimated the canal from Schlosser to Lewiston; viz. the canal to be 33 feet in breadth at the surface of the water, and 4 1-2 feet in depth, which will be sufficiently large to admit the passage of boats of twenty tons burthen. The data from which I make the estimate are the following:—

In the first place I am persuaded that not any part of the canal between the navigable waters communicating with Niagara River and the Genesee, would require to be excavated more than eight feet in depth; and I am persuaded that there would not be any rocks and but very few stones to be removed. The whole distance will be plain digging.

From estimates which I have made, it appears that in every mile of the canal it will be necessary to remove 10880 cords of earth, which estimated at the same price we pay at this place for excavating cellars, mill races, &c. which is 75 cents per cord, the undertaker finding tools, provision, and every other necessary article, amounts to \$8160 per. mile, and consequently for 43 miles (the distance of

the canal from Tonnawanta to Black Creek) to the sum of \$350,000. I am however inclined to be of the opinion, that this sum would not be required; because for a considerable part of the distance, the canal would pass through Cranberry marshes, the earth of which is composed of a kind of vegetable muck, (if I may use that term) which might be thrown out of the canal by the aid of machinery in large quantities, for less than 50 cents per cord.

If we admit, however, that this part of the canal should amount to the expense I have estimated, and that the expense attending a continuation of it from Genesee river to the navigable waters of Mud Creek, communicating with the Onondaga river, to an equal sum, the whole canal will only amount to the sum of \$701,760.

Being fully convinced, as to myself, that the canal on the route I have pointed out, can be completed with a small expense, when compared with either of the other routes, I shall now give it as my decided opinion, that it is not only the most economical route, but that it would be by far the most beneficial to the public in general; because it would be more safe, more certain, more commodious, and generally more expeditious and less expensive than the navigation of lake Ontario, as part of the water communication from lake Erie.

In all kinds of transportation, we find the frequent shifting, unloading, storing, and reloading of articles, to be attended with many inconveniences, delays and expenses, as would be the case were the navigation confined to lake Ontario. For instance, vessels bringing articles from lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, &c. have to unload these articles at the east end of Lake Erie, where they must be reloaded in boats; but could those articles be conveyed at once to market, in those boats, on the route I have recommended, without any further unloading, reloading, &c., it is evident that it would not only save a vast expense, but prevent the damage sustained by goods in their transportation. For should lake Ontario constitute part of the communication, it will be necessary in that case to unload and reload all articles brought from the upper lakes to market,

five times; that is to say, they must be unloaded at the outlet of Lake Erie, and reloaded in boats, and conveyed to Lewiston, and there unloaded and reloaded in vessels that navigate lake Ontario to the canal communicating with the Oneida lake, and here they must be unloaded and reloaded in boats; passing at each removal into different hands and subject to expenses for storage, cooperage, &c., at each unloading, all of which will add to the expense of transportation. Delays will also frequently happen on lake Ontario, on account of the wind, as well as other accounts, and some risk will attend the navigation of the lake; whereas should the route I have pointed out be ultimately adopted, all those delays, dangers, and inconveniences, will be avoided. The same boat that receives the articles at the outlet of lake Erie, will convey them from thence to market, without any further unloading or reloading, than at their place of destination.

In fine, in whatever point of view I consider this subject, I am an advocate for the Tonnewanta route; being convinced that it will be less expensive, and more practicable in its execution than either of the other routes. From a conviction of this fact, if a company could be formed to undertake the business, (in case the United States should think the object inexpedient,) I myself, would subscribe stock to the amount of \$2,500. payable in 5 annual installments, under the impression that this communication would more eminently contribute to the benefit of the nation, than any other undertaking of the kind, in any other part of the United States.

Which is respectfully submitted, by Sir, with high consideration, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

Batavia, July 30, 1808.

P. S.—Tonawonta Creek is navigable for Boats of 20 Tons Burthen from the Niagara River to the commencement of the Canal at A. At this place there is a Rapid of 20 Perches, which makes about 3 1-2 or 4 Feet Fall. From the Point A the Tonawonta Creek is navigable for Boats

of the same Burthen to near the Tonnawonta Village; but as it runs so extremely crooked I deemed it most eligible to commence the Canal at the Point A. Oak Orchard Creek is navigable for Boats of the same Burthen from the Point B to the Point C. Hence if it should be deemed most eligible to make use of the Tonnawonta Creek for this Communication as far as it may be navigated with very little Improvement, and also that part of the Oak Orchard Creek from where it would be intersected with this Canal at the Point B to C, it would save the Excavating of at least 14 Miles of Canal, and consequently decrease the Amount of the Estimate I have made to \$587,520.

Having however but little knowledge of the tract of Country between the Genesee River and Mud Creek the Cutting that part of the Canal may amount to a larger sum than I have estimated or it may not be so great.¹

USE MADE OF MR. ELLICOTT'S DATA.

ALBANY, 24th August, 1808.

DEAR SIR: I have to acknowledge receipt of your very valuable and highly important communication on the subject of canals between the Hudson, and lake Erie. I shall make it a part of my report, and have no doubt, that it will materially change the ideas of the Secretary of the Treasury, in regard to what ought to be done here.

In his report to congress, it appears, that he contemplated a canal for ship navigation, from Fort Schlosser down, without being apprised of the difficulty of such navigation from that point to lake Erie, against the current of Niagara river.

Another consideration of importance, is, that the route you have traced, would not only bestow on the long tract of country through which it would pass, a very additional value, and of course promote its population, but it would

1. The plan or sketch referred to above is not preserved with the foregoing letter in the Holland Land Co.'s papers.

also, divert to our own seaports, a considerable trade that would otherwise go to Canada.

I have observed in your communication, that the Seneca river is once or twice called the Onondaga river. If you have no objections I will alter it in the copy.

With great esteem I am your humble servant,

S. DEWITT.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esquire*.

Evans MSS.

A PROSPECTIVE SUBSCRIPTION.

LANCASTER, October 20th, 1808.

DAVID E. EVANS,

Batavia.

DEAR NEPHEW: Your several letters together with one from Mr. Stevens was duly handed to me at Mr. Busti's & laid before that Gentleman—who was well pleased with their Contents, & altho heretofore not an advocate for Turnpikes & Canals, he offers to Subscribe towards that Canal provided it shall be undertaken either by the United States, or the State of New York—every other Lot on the Canal as a Donation. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT

Evans MSS.

ROUTES TO MARKET IN 1810.

PHILADA 8 May 1810

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Batavia*

DEAR SIR: . . . By a conversation I had with Mr. Parish who has made a commercial establishment on the S. Lawrence it would appear that the produce of the West Genesee will apparently find its vent that way out. For he assures me that the Great Sodus is already become the emporium of the staple commodities raised in the East of the Genesee, and that Utica feels extremely the opening of that

new way for the exportation of the country produce. If only half of what Parish relates is true the State of New York will I expect feel the importance of opening the internal navigation from Lake Erie and improve the one of the Mohawk. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

HARBOR NEED REALIZED.

PHILADA 18th July 1810

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*

Batavia.

DEAR SIR: . . . In our correspondence of last year the subject of taking country produce in payment of interest has been so fully discussed, that it is superfluous for me to state anew the cogent motives that made me set aside the plan of accepting grain or cattle of the settlers. It may however happen that the circumstances of the country render it convenient to alter the resolution of admitting of no other payment but that of cash. In a long conversation, I had lately with Mr. Parish, the trade of the Lake was one of the primary subjects. Great Sodus he informed me had already become a place of so much importance for the exportation of the country produce, that Utica was feeling the natural consequences of this new outlet. The advantages to be derived by the channel of the St. Lawrence to the North Western parts of the State, have so struck the mind of Mr. Parish that besides the purchase of a tract of land at Oswegatche, he made the acquisition of Ogdensburg, erected three large storehouses, established the trading firm of Joseph Rosseel and Co. who have launched two vessels for the sole purpose of navigating the Ontario in collection of grain wheat potassches,¹ &c. There is no doubt but such an establishment (whatsoever might be the result to the undertaker) will prove highly beneficial to all the countries, whose productions can convenient-

1. Potash.

ly be carried on the shores of the Ontario. It is a pity that along the borders of our territory no harbour is to be found, and that the Conniangone's outlet only admits the approach of boats. Whatever little might be the convenience, that the place affords to the exportation, there is much probability, that in time it will become a place of deposit equally resorted too by the Traders on the lake as Lewiston or Queenstown on the Niagara. . . .

PAULUS BUSTI.

MR. BUSTI SKEPTICAL AS TO THE CANAL.

BLOCKLEY'S RETREAT,¹ 17 May 1811

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*
Batavia

DEAR SIR: . . . I beg you to devote a page explanatory of the probability or improbability of the Canal of communication with the Hudson being executed. In the report of the commissioners I can perceive but vague plans which leave ample room to doubts. As the subject has been brought before the Legislature and I suppose it must naturally afford a vast field of conversation and projects not only among the community but even among the best and most influential class of the gentry I wish you could give some accounts of that interesting business that must materially affect the value of the lands at a distance even of 50 miles from the Canal. Another chapter I beg likewise to devote to a minute detail of the benefits the Country already derives from the increasing navigation of the Ontario and exports down the St. Lawrence, connected with an enumeration of the Establishments already made or about making in the country whose infallible tendency will be to encourage and animate the industry of the agriculturist in raising products for the sale of which they are sure to find a market. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

1. Apparently some resort near Philadelphia.

THE STATE SEEKS HOLLAND LAND COMPANY'S LAND FOR THE
CANAL.

BATAVIA March 30, 1812.

PAUL BUSTI *Esquire,*
Philadelphia

MY DEAR SIR: While I remained at Albany the Commissioners appointed on the Erie & Hudson Canal waited on me to ascertain the amount or quantity of land the Holland Company intended to subscribe towards effecting that object, alledging among other things that the former proposition was of so indefinite a nature that no calculation could be made or estimate formed of its probable value, as they say it may happen that all the land where the canal shall ultimately be laid will be sold by the period the ground fixed for the canal to pass is determined upon, and then by the terms of our proposition to wit, to make a grant of every other lot bounding the Canal that may belong to the Company would turn out no grant at all. What these people would wish is that the land the Company might see fit to make a donation of should at once be located. I informed them that my powers did not extend to objects of this nature, but that I would communicate their application to you, who had the necessary power to either acquiesce or otherwise as should seem right. Among other things I observed to them that as yet the project might be considered as in embryo [*sic*] and that from present appearances there was nothing like certainty that the object would go into effect for many years; that of course in case the Holland Company should make any specific location of lands for that object the lands should not be subjected to taxation to them during the period the canal had a lien upon it; or from the time the location was made until it should return to the Company again in case the Canal was not made, which they had considered would only be justice, and had not the least doubt but the Legislature would pass the necessary laws for that purpose. In order to enable you to make up your mind upon this subject in case you should assent to their proposition of locating the

land, I will just observe that the quantity of land, which we had proposed to make a grant of in case the Canal had been laid along the path I pointed out would have amounted to about 20,000 Acres; but then it was supposed that the lands would have been worth from 15 to 20 Dollars pr. Acre whenever the Canal should be compleated. If you should assent to make the location of land aforesaid be pleased to inform me of the amount you would agree to locate for that object, and also in what part or parts of the territory you should be inclined to make the grant. The Canal Commissioners alledge that the great utility of the Canal will effect the value of the land for a distance of from 30 to 40 miles on both sides of it, and therefore I presume think that land donations for the effecting this object ought to be made within these limits. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MR. BUSTI NOT ZEALOUS FOR THE CANAL.

PHILADELPHIA 4th May 1812.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Batavia*

DEAR SIR: . . . I have in due time regularly received from both your favors of the 10th & 30th of March. Rejoiced at your safe return home I did not hurry myself in answering the question arising out of the application made to you by the Canal Commissioners, for as the Assembly had been adjourned by the Governor, whatever should be my final determination on the subject of locating for the use of the Canal a parcel of land, there would be time enough for obtaining the proposed Act of the Legislature for liberating the tract thus located from taxation.

Had the Canal been laid down along the track pointed out by you, the Company would certainly have reaped much benefit, but as seems to be the intention to lead it to the north, between the two first ledges, instead of carrying it in a more straight line between the second and third ledge, so as to meet Allen's Creek at LeRoy's or near it, my zeal

for the success of the undertaking is much abated. Wishing however to show, that in objects of public utility the Holland Company is not meanly actuated by motives of individual advantage, I authorize you to appropriate for the proposed Canal one half of one of the Townships N 6 or 7 in P or O under the express condition that if within 20 years this Canal is not fairly gone into operation and so kept during 10 years more, the lands are to return to the present owners unincumbered with any charges or taxes of whatever denomination.

As the intention in accepting donations in lands, for the purpose of carrying on the Canal, can be of no other but of converting them into money, the location of the half of the Township would probably turn out useless, if the Commissioners, delegated by the State, were denied the power of the disposal of the lands till after the fulfillment of the conditions of the grant. To do away this difficulty, the best mode I think¹ would be, that the gratuity should be immediately conveyed to the State, or to whom the Legislature should direct, and that the State should declare himself responsible towards the Holland Company for such monies as shall at any time have been raised from the sales of the appropriated tract of land, if the Canal should fail and the lands to revert in consequence of that failure or of its not having been undertaken.

I have so little expectation of the Canal ever being undertaken that I have been tempted to reduce the number of years of its beginning to 10, but I rather submit to put a longer lien on the land, than incur the reproach of illiberality. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

FOR A SURVEY THROUGH TONAWANDA SWAMP.

[ALBANY], *In Committee*, June 14, 1812.

SIR: The opinion you entertain and have frequently exprest, that the most eligible route for inland Navigation

1. Mr. Busti's usual way of spelling this word.

between Lake Erie and the Hudson is thro' the Tonewanto Swamp, ascending from the Mouth of that Stream and passing thro' the Swamp to Black Creek, has called forth our serious attention. And altho' we apprehend a want of water, fatal to the Enterprise, yet our Respect for your Intelligence, and the local knowledge which you have acquired lead us to wish that the subject may in due course be properly examined. To this Effect, and as one of the many Preparations for final and more critical Surveys, we are to request, Sir, that you will employ a proper Person, and as we have confidence in the Talents of your Brother Benjamin to take the Levels and Distances from the Mouth of the Tonewanto up to the Swamp and so on to the Black Creek and down that Creek till you get thro' the Ledge.

The reasonable Expense of this work shall be paid, on an account rendered, to your order. And for your own Trouble in giving the needful Direction we pray you to accept, before Hand, our Thanks with the assurances of that Respect with which we have the Honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

GOUVR. MORRIS
THOMAS EDDY

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*,
Batavia.

Evans MSS.

IN QUEST OF A SAFE INVESTMENT.

PHILADELPHIA 2nd July 1812.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*, *Batavia.*

DEAR SIR: . . . By the public papers I see that the Assembly of your state have entered into the project of digging a water communication from the Niagara river to the Hudson and that for carrying it through they have authorized a loan of 5 Million of Dollars at 6 pr C. If this is true, are you disposed to invest in that loan and is Mr. Benjamin likewise inclined thereto? The Company must of

course subscribe, and I am the more willing to do so because I conceive the State security ten times better than that of the Wire and other banks instituted by bushels.

The intended Canal, successful or not, will if only begun enhance the [value of the] lands thro' which it will run. Whether its course is to be in conformity of the map published, or whether some deviation in the original plan might take place, is a thing impossible for me to judge of. I might wish, that through the influence of your friends either you or your brother Mr. Benjamin had some hand in the management of that enterprise, so that the agents of the Company should not be entirely left in the dark about this interesting business. I do not wish to draw all the possible advantage, that the Canal might afford. Feeling as I do, that the gratuitous gift of land would not free the Dutch from jealousy and envy, if they were to enhance their prices to the utmost, I do not wish however to let entirely escape the good opportunity of raising the lands in the vicinity of the Canal on a moderate scale. I beg you to communicate to me your sentiments on this subject, by exchanging thoughts we may fall on a plan by which to be ruled. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

THOMAS EDDY¹ TO JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

NEW YORK 7th mo. 10th, 1812.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

RESPECTED FRIEND: We had some general conversation last winter at Albany on the subject of the Holland Com-

1. This distinguished philanthropist was one of the original canal commissioners under the Act of 1810. For numerous references to his connection with the canal enterprise, see Buffalo Historical Society Publications, vol. XII. A member of the Society of Friends, he was among Joseph Ellicott's most intimate correspondents; his knowledge of Western New York antedated Ellicott's, having been appointed by the Society of Friends to visit the Indians in New York State as early as 1793. He is perhaps most widely known for his work towards establishing the State penitentiary system, under the Act of 1796. He has been called "the American Howard." He died in New York, Sept. 16, 1827.

pany making a voluntary cession of a tract of land to the State, in order to encourage the prosecution of the proposed canal from Lake Erie to the Hudsons River. Since then, the Board of Commissioners have appointed DeWitt Clinton & myself a Committee, to make application to the several proprietors of large tracts in the Western part of the State, in order to obtain information of the number of acres & situation of the land, that each proprietor may be willing to grant for the purpose of promoting an undertaking, which, when compleated, will so essentially serve to increase the value of their Lands, and moreover, would enable them with far greater facility to recover the large amount of debts due for Lands sold to settlers. The moment the work is commenced, an additional value immediately takes place on the whole of your Lands, for it is evident that *every part* of your tract will be benefited, more or less, according to situation.

We intended to have written to our mutual Friend Paul Busti on the subject, but Le Roy and Bayard tell us, that Busti would not likely come to any result on the business till he should be advised by thee. I therefore submit, for thy consideration, the propriety of thy stating to Busti, my having addressed a Letter to thee on the subject of making a cession of Land to the State, and thy sentiments as to the quantity of acres and situation of the Land to be appropriated for that purpose. It appears to me, that the plan mentioned by thee to the Surveyor General, of giving Land on the line of the Canal, may be attended with some difficulty and it might be better to fix on a tract, in any part of your great tract, as you then would be willing to give a larger quantity.

The amount in Land that other large proprietors may be induced to grant to the State, will depend very much on what your Company may agree to contribute. If *the whole* should amount to something considerable, there is no doubt the Legislature would agree to commence the work—but it is, in truth, so materially and decidedly your interest to make a handsome & liberal offer, that there can be no doubt of your doing equal to our expectation—if unfortunately

you should fall short of what might reasonably be expected from you, the whole plan would be frustrated.

I wish thou wouldst furnish me with a list of the names of large Land holders on the west side of the Genesee River, who reasonably ought to make similar grants.

We have written to England for one of the first Engineers there and am in hope he will be here next Fall.

We can procure the five million of dollars on loan (as authorized by Law) at any time.

We have sent out two surveyors this season to examine further from Cayuga to Rome, and from thence on the *south* side of the Mohawk to Schenectady, or to some point on the Hudson River.

The committee wrote thee from Albany requesting of thee to employ a suitable person critically to examine the country and take levels from Tonnawanta—this I hope thou will be able to have done this season—In expectation of hearing from [thee] soon by mail I am

Thy assured Friend

THOMAS EDDY

THE INTERFERENCE OF WAR.

BATAVIA July 21, 1812.

THOMAS EDDY *Esquire*

New York

DEAR FRIEND: I herewith acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th which came to hand the 7th instant.

I forward this day a copy of your letter to Mr. Busti on the subject of the land donation. When I receive his directions I will make you acquainted with the result.

I have received the joint letter of yourself & Mr. Morris on the subject of making a level from the mouth of the Tonnawonta Creek by the way of the Tonnawonta Swamp to Genesee river. I should have replied to that communication at an earlier period had not the late declaration of war occasioned some disorder in our affairs here and other ob-

jects occupied the most of my leisure moments, together with my not knowing precisely where to direct my answer.

In your communication you mention that it would be satisfactory to you if my brother Mr. Benjamin Ellicott should make the contemplated level. My brother's constitution being too delicate to perform a service so laborious I should wish to be informed whether if I should procure this level to be made by any other person, such as I should approve of, with such assistance as my brother might afford it would in that case be satisfactory to the commissioners.

I have had it in contemplation to commence this business about the last of August. By that period the noxious flies and vermin that infest these low lands will not be so abundant as they are at this season of the year.

Meantime believe me very truly and sincerely with great regard,

Your real Friend

JOSEPH ELLICOTT

LAND DONATION DISCUSSED WITH MR. BUSTI.

BATAVIA July 21, 1812.

PAUL BUSTI *Esquire,*
Philadelphia.

MY DEAR SIR: Although I wrote to you on the 30th of March ult. upon the subject of a donation of land towards aiding the Prosecution of the great Canal and received your reply and propositions as to the quantity and situation of the land you would propose to make the donation I have not as yet made your proposition known to the Commissioners, believing that they would consider the quantity of lands so offered as very limited, as it is much less than the quantity offered by the first proposal.

I received a few days since an official application in relation to the donation from Thomas Eddy. Inclose herewith his letter to me on that subject, and altho' I might at once have answered him by making known the proposition you

propose without giving you or myself any further trouble with the business I nevertheless take the liberty to suggest to you whether we might not venture to make a proposition that would have the appearance of being more liberal, but in reality not any more. I am sensible that the number of acres you propose making a grant of will appear to the Commissioners and probably to the public very limited when contrasted with the immense advantages these gentlemen think will accrue to the Holland Company on account of this Canal. I am thinking probably it would most comport with the real interest of the Holland Company if we were to make an offer of a large body of lands in the southern part of the Purchase, say all that tract between the Alleghany river and the North boundary of Pennsylvania. The offer of lands that you have made would amount to about 11,520 Acres, which we hold at \$2.50 pr. Acre, making the sum of \$28,800. The amount of land contained between the Alleghany river and Pennsylvania line 115,849 Acres, which valued at 25 Cents pr. Acre on an average, and which I should think would be a tolerable just Evaluation amounts to \$28,962.

When we reflect that we have to pay as much tax for these mountains as we do for our best lands and that we shall have to pay at least 10 times the tax for this 115,849 Acres as we shall have to pay for the 11,520 Acres it would manifestly be to the advantage of the Company to make the grant of lands on the south side of the Alleghany river.

It would also appear to the public vastly more liberal because the quantity of land is so much greater, and neither the Commissioners nor the public have any knowledge of the difference in quality. I do not learn that Van Wickle is likely to pay down any money for these lands.

I will beg leave however to mention with submission to your better judgment that if we could prevail upon the Commissioners to carry the Canal along the route I first pointed out that the Holland Company would be great gainers even if they should make a donation to the State of not only the half township you have proposed, but also of all the lands between the Alleghany river and North

boundary of Pennsylvania that I have proposed. As far as I am personally concerned in shares of these lands I should think I had made a great bargain because all the lands within the vicinity of the Canal might in case the Canal should be made be sold for \$10 pr. acre; whereas at this time there is very little of it will bring more than three Dollars pr. acre, and a considerable proportion of it could not be sold for any price. On the whole I should be in favor of making a liberal donation as to quantity of acres; because if the Canal should never be made the land would again revert to the Company, and during the period it was out of their hands it would not be subject to taxation, and if the Canal should be made there is not a doubt but that it would so increase the value of the lands contiguous as to pay four fold for the donation I have proposed. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

LOOKING OUT FOR HOLLAND LAND COMPANY INTERESTS.

PHILADELPHIA 1st August 1812

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*

Batavia

. . . Mr. Eddy's letter, which I return you, would be worth commenting [on] if I had the leisure of conversing with you on its subject. I find that that period which I have interlined so singular that it would seem as if the Committee men wish us to understand that the whole success of the Canal scheme is to be made to depend from the Dutch generosity. It is evident and plain that if ever that scheme is seriously intended to be carried through before it is completed the Holland Company will have parted with the better part of their territory and that consequently the benefits resulting to the lands from the water communication will not accrue to the present owners but to the settlers. Under this true point of view the interest I feel for this magnificent work is more temperate than [than] Mr. Eddy and his Colleagues thinck. In objecting

to my first offer of half of the lots fronting the Canal they did tacitly confess that the Dutch would really not be benefitted by the Canal, as at its completion they would have perhaps nothing to grant. Aware as they are of this possible case is their application for a large donation reasonable? I had only for the sake of policy since the rejection of my first offer authorized you to make the grant of half of a Township, but since the expectations are hinted on such a broad scale on the part of the Commissioners I feel the necessity of enlarging my offer not in value but in quantity of acres. If this can please the Gentlemen I agree that you should proffer to the State under the conditions already understood between us the 115,800 A situated between the Allegany river and the Pennsylvania line. This grant if accepted is preferable to that of the half of a Township for the Company and probably will be more palatable to the Commissioners as it sounds higher in the ears of an ill judging public. Two things however I should wish you were able to obtain. First the immediate acceptance of the tract that we may [be] freed from paying taxes for a tract we cannot sell as soon as it is engaged to the State. Secondly that if after examination of the ground it should be found that the probable expence of the Canal would be equal in carrying it southwardly as to come at or through Batavia that this course should be taken in preference to the one delineated on the edited map.

Of this second point I needed properly not to have made mention for since you have been requested to take levels I am sure that you will contrive to make the Canal follow the track as first suggested to you by Mr. De Wit.

I regret in some measure to discover from Eddy's letter, that the work, notwithstanding the spirited Act authorizing the loan of 5 Millions, seems not to be undertaken in a short time, for the loan is not opened, and the Commissioners diffident of American Genius look up to England for an Engineer. It is ten to one that when such a man shall have come over all the measurements and levels should to be made and taken again. This will prove a loss of time and expenses and by no means insure success for I confess

not to be prepossessed in favor of foreigners in national undertakings. . . .

PAUL BUSTI

THE LAND CESSION FURTHER DISCUSSED.

[BATAVIA] August 19, 1812.

PAUL BUSTI *Esquire*

Philadelphia

MY DEAR SIR: Your favor of the first instant duly came to hand. The observations you have made on the Canal subject coincide precisely with my own opinion. At the time of mentioning the propriety of making the grant of all the land lying between the Allegany river and the north boundary of Pennsylvania it did not occur to me that this grant would include so large a proportion of the lands belonging to the Messrs. Willinks. In consequence of which I deemed it proper in making known to the Commissioners the cession of land you agree to make to exclude their land out of the cession, and also that part of township No. 1 Range 3 that falls within the limits of the intending grant of cession, presuming that the Messrs. Willinks are interested in the share land of two million of acres. This arrangement I presume will meet your wishes, because I suspect the same thing has even escaped your vigilant attention to the interests of those whose affairs you have the general management, as I confess it did mine. . . .

P. S. I did think 20 years too long to make this cession. I therefore took the liberty to mention 15 years, and 5 years to keep the Canal in order. I enclose herewith a copy of my letter to Eddy on this business. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT

CONDITIONS OF THE GRANT STATED.

[BATAVIA] Aug. 19, 1812.

THOMAS EDDY *Esquire*
New York.

MOST RESPECTED FRIEND: The Agent General of the Holland Land Company having enabled me to reply to that part of your letter dated New York 7th Mo. 10 which relates to the cession in lands you have solicited as a grant from said Company towards accomplishing the project of the contemplated Canal from the Hudson to the lakes, I now do myself the pleasure to make you acquainted with the result of the application.

That gentleman appears to be of the opinion from the circumstance of your wishing him to change his former proposed grant of each alternate lot adjoining the Canal which might at the period of its location belong to the Company for lands in some other part of the Company's territory, that the time is yet very distant before this work will be undertaken and if it should be delayed until the Company had disposed of their lands they would receive no essential benefit from the Canal, because all its advantages would accrue to the holders of the land.

The Agent however (being desirous to lend the aid of the Holland Company in the prosecution of this great national object, although not very sanguine from the celerity of its progress as to its being productive of much interest or benefit the present holders of the land, yet if ever accomplished will greatly promote the agricultural, commercial and manufacturing interests of the southern and western part of the State, as well as extend its influence to the remotest limits of the United States) has authorized me to make a grant of 100,632 acres situate in the southern part of the Company's territory, adjoining and contiguous to the navigation of that part of the Alleghany river within this State, which lands are particularly designated by the map or plan herein enclosed. It is however to be understood that this donation is to be made on account of the several Dutch land holders and Companies of which the Agent

General is attorney within the limits of the counties of Genesee, Niagara, Allegany, Cattaraugus & Chautauque. These lands proposed to be ceded belong to them as a joint property.

The land to be granted under this express condition, that is to say: if within 15 years this Canal has not fairly gone into operation, and so kept during five years more the lands are to return to their present owners, their heirs or assigns unincumbered with any charges or taxes of whatever denomination.

The Agent General further evincing his liberality to aid and promote this great object observes that "as the intention of accepting donations in land for the purpose of carrying on the Canal can be no other than that of converting them into money, the location would turn out probably useless if the Commissioners delegated by the State were denied the power of the disposal of the land until after the conditions of the fulfilment of the Grant. To do away this difficulty the best method I think would be that the gratuity should be immediately conveyed to the State or to whom the Legislature should direct, and that the State should declare himself responsible for such monies as shall at any time have been received from the sales of the appropriated tract of land if the canal should fail of being effected and the lands to revert in consequence of that failure, or of its not having been undertaken."

We shall be ready at any time to make this cession conformably to the preceding terms and conditions. Meantime believe me

With great truth

Your friend &c.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THE CANAL AND HOLLAND LAND COMPANY SETTLERS.

PHILADA 7 October 1812.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*
Batavia

DEAR SIR: . . . I had a visit of Mr. Eddy two days ago in which he handed me the enclosed letter of Mr. De Witt Clinton. It is plainly enough expressed in it that the offer of the tract of land delineated in your map shewn me by Mr. Eddy has met the expectation of the Commissioners of the projected Canal. Still it is evident that they wish something more should be done by the landholders for the facilitation of the enterprize, to wit that the time for the completion of the Canal should be extended and that the excavation might be freely made without taking any thing neither for the ground to be cut through and that covered by the road on both sides nor for the use of any quarry sand clay or lime that might be found at hand. To these demands which appeared to me reasonable I did not make any great objection. I have even willingly agreed in regard to the first article that five years should be added to those you offered so that the epoch of reversion of the grant be fixed at 25 in lieu of 20 years. On the second point I have exhibited my readiness to concur in however gave to Mr. Eddy a hint that before this grant should be virtually conceded by any of the great Landholders whether it would not be a wise measure to open all along the Counties where the Canal might with some probability be carried through to open general subscriptions lists by which every landholder great or small should engage to allow the free use of quarries and make the voluntary gift of the strip of land required for the excavation and paths. Mr. Eddy was pleased with my suggestion the tendency of which he soon conceived would be of making any one readily subscribe in the hope that his so doing might be an inducement of carrying the Canal through his lands. Whereas by first calling for individual subscriptions many and many would keep back in the expectation that when the

scite of the Canal was fixed upon they might do pay the State dearly for the strips of their lands.

If no better scheme for obtaining this object is hit upon by the Commissioners I expect that the hinted by me subscription lists will be set on foot, and probably among other things you will be saddled with by the Commissioners the procuring of such signers will be added. I do not think you'll find difficult to persuade neither the old nor the new settlers. Whether it would be adviceable or not for new purchasers to impose upon them in taking Contracts to sign such lists is a thing that I leave entirely to your own decision. I refer equally to your better judgment to determine to what extent the grant of quarrying hauling sand, clay & limestone is to be allowed beyond the strip of land to be given. For if no limits are prescribed to the free use of such materials it may happen that some parcels of land be entirely ruined. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

MR. ELLICOTT CONSIDERS THE TAXES.

BATAVIA March 29, 1813.

[To PAUL BUSTI]

DEAR SIR: . . . In regard to the proposed donation of lands on account of the State Canal. I have not understood whether the Canal Commissioners have made an application to the State for the acceptance of the grant or otherwise. As not any of the public papers in Albany publish the Journals of Assembly other than by scraps I shall not ascertain before the Assembly adjourns, and a schedule of the laws is published whether any law of this description has been passed or otherwise. If however the canal commissioners should not have procured the acceptance of the land by the State upon the terms proposed, and that they have taken no measures to releave the Company from the payment of taxes on these lands that in that case

I would recommend that the canal commissioners should be informed at once that the Company could not in any manner consider themselves subject to the proposition they had made, that it would be both unreasonable and unjust for them to expect the Company to grant a donation of land to the State upon the terms of paying the taxes themselves, and therefore from hence forward they considered their proposed donation null and void, in as much as it had not been accepted upon the terms of the proposition, and that they should make sale of it the same as if such proposed grant had never been tendered to them. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THE HOLLAND LAND COMPANY'S OFFER ACCEPTED.

PHILADA 30th Dber 1813.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*
Batavia.

DEAR SIR: . . . I have finally received by an official communication of Messre. De Witt Clinton & Th. Eddy the intelligence that at the meeting of the commissioners held the 27th of November it has been determined to accept the proffer made by the Dutch of the tract of land on the State line as a donation for completing the grand Canal. The conditions are as expressed in your letter to said Commissioners dated 19th August 1812 except that the time fixed by you at 20 has been extended by me at 25 years.

They wished me to alter the grant so that for every 30 miles of Canal completed in the period of 25 years 10000 As [acres] should be censed free from the lien attached to the whole tract. I refused absolutely that indulgence, for if the waters of the Erie are not made to wash the shores of Hudson River the Genesee Country will not be advantaged by a partial execution of an interior navigation. I have likewise been desired to grant the scite of the

canal and of the paths (150 feet width) through the Company's territory and to grant likewise the free use of quarrying stone digging sand & cutting wood for the use of the undertaking. Considering that by abusing this last indulgence many farm lots might be made unsaleable, or greatly diminish their intrinsic value I have denied it. As for the scite of the Canal & paths my answer has been that the Company having set the example to the Inhabitants of the State with a generous offer it could not be expected that they should put themselves up as a model of imitation in everything. However should the owners of the lands trough which the canal is intended to pass universally subscribe to the grant of its scite the Company would likewise assent to the gift. If otherwise the ground is purchased either with money or by priviledges on the navigation of the future Canal the Company was to receive equal compensations.

I make you acquainted with the summary of this correspondence for as most likely after the Commissioners have reported to the Legislature their doings you may be called upon you should know how far I have gone in offering to contribute to the grand undertaking. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

A. S. CLARKE TO JOS. ELLICOTT.

CLARENCE, May 19th, 1814.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: I rec'd your letter, mentioning that you wished to know whether a law had past accepting the grant of land from the Holland Company towards cutting the contemplated Canal. There was not any law passed the Legislature relative to the Canal, except the law, to suspend, the right, vested by a former law to the Commissioners to negotiate a loan, for the purpose of cutting the

Canal. We have nothing new here of importance, all is yet quiet.

I am Sir very Respectfully

yr friend & obt Ser.

ARCHD. S. CLARKE.¹

"THE CANAL BUBBLE."

BATAVIA Aug 12 1815

PAUL BUSTI *Esquire*,
Philadelphia,

MY DEAR SIR: . . . The canal bubble it appears has at length exploded, and I presume Gouverneur Morris will now again allow us the liberty of giving Tonnawonta the appellation of a creek instead of a brook as he called it in his Report. The deed granting to the canal bubble the lands south of Allegany river you mention is cancelled, and the lands liberated and again for sale. As that tract of country is the least feasible in the Company's territory it must be many years before it will be sold in small tracts to settlers. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THE MEMORIAL OF 1816.

NEW YORK 6th Jan. 1816.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: I have sent to the Post Office, with this letter, a pamphlet, containing the memorial of the citizens of New-

1. Archibald S. Clarke was at this time a member of the New York State Senate from the Western District, which then embraced the counties of the Holland Purchase. He had been elected to the Assembly, spring of 1808, and was re-elected, 1809 and 1810, holding to July, 1811. He was State Senator from July, 1812, to July, 1816. He was elected by the Assembly, from the Senators of the Western District to be a member of the Council of Appointment, which appointed nearly all of the executive and judicial officers of the State. The Council was abolished by the Constitution of 1821. Mr. Clarke was Representative in the 14th Congress, June, 1816, to Mch. 3, 1817. He lived for many years at Newstead, in present Erie Co., removing later to Cattaraugus Co.

York, in favor of a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson. It is highly important that the west should second the efforts of the south on this great question.

I will thank you for your opinion as to the best course to be pursued, in addition to that already taken.

Yours respectfully

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

ELLICOTT TO CLINTON, ON THE CANAL ROUTE.

BATAVIA January 19, 1816.

Honble DE WITT CLINTON Esquire

DEAR SIR: I with pleasure acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th Instant, accompanying the memorial of the Citizens of New York in favor of a canal navigation between the great western Lakes and the tide waters of the Hudson.

The exposition the citizens of New York have given of the general Direction the Canal ought to be carried for the promotion of the most possible advantage to this State and American community I think must be conclusive to all unbiassed minds. Still however from reports now in circulation in this quarter it would seem that the Lake Ontario route is in view and intended to be recommended by his excellency the Governor in his message to the ensuing Legislature. This report has occasioned much anxiety in the minds of a great majority of the principal Inhabitants in these regions devoted to the real advantage and prosperity of the State.

Should his excellency recommend that route (which however I can hardly persuade myself will be the case) a remonstrance will be forwarded against it. As immediately as my numerous avocations will permit I will do myself the pleasure to furnish you with my ideas of the easy practicability of this immense important object in preference to the Lake Ontario route if placed under the Direction

of (without intending flattery) one practical man of Mr. C[linto]n's information. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

BUFFALO'S FIRST HARBOR MEETING.

BUFFALO, Jan. 22d, 1816.

SIR: We herewith forward you minutes of the proceedings of a meeting held in this village on the 20th current.

The object of the meeting you will observe is expressed in the resolution.

We are sensible of the magnitude of the undertaking and of the difficulties to be surmounted; yet however great, we believe it may be accomplished, and that the expense will bear no proportion to the benefits which a good harbor at this place would confer on this section of our country.

From the immense interest which yourself individually and the company whom you represent, have in the proposed improvement, we have no doubt that if you should not be disposed to undertake the business exclusively, that you would lend your assistance and influence in such measures as might be deemed expedient.

Your views and ideas on the subject are respectfully requested. Mr. Harrison will confer with you on the subject and receive any propositions or projects which you will be pleased to submit.

We are very respectfully, Sir,
Your very ob. Serv.

BENJAMIN CARYL
H. B. POTTER
J. HARRISON
SAMUEL WILKESON
REUBEN B. HEACOCK
B. W. HOPKINS
CH TOWNSEND

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

THE RESOLUTIONS.

At a meeting of the Inhabitants of the Village of Buffalo, held at Pomeroy's Tavern, January 20, 1816.

B. W. HOPKINS Charm

CHARLES TOWNSEND Secy

The meeting having taken into consideration the importance and necessity of taking measures for the improvement of the harbor of Buffalo Creek

On Motion it was RESOLVED

That a committee of seven be appointed to correspond and co-operate with Companies or individuals interested in the improvement of said Harbor—and if necessary to petition either to the General or State Government for assistance and generally to do whatever the Committee may deem expedient to be done in order to effect the object contemplated.

VOTED, That said Committee consist of Messrs. Benjamin W. Hopkins, Samuel Wilkinson [Wilkeson], Jonas Harrison, Reuben B. Heacock, Benjamin Caryl, Heman B. Potter and Charles Townsend.

Attest

CH: TOWNSEND Secy.

Evans MSS.

CLINTON ON PORTER AND OTHERS.

Confidential.

NEW YORK 3 Feby 1816.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: I thank you for your letter: I feel not a little pleased with your favorable opinion of our proceedings in promotion of the Grand Canal.

Our friend Genl P. B. Porter is now here: He has always been in favor of the Ontario Route. He has in-

fused his opinions into Tompkins, who is profoundly ignorant of the subject, whose opinion is therefore indirect—not worthy of respect but whose opposition is. Spencer & the Lt. Gov. are decidedly hostile but I set them down as Cyphers if we make exertions worthy of the cause. You & all your friends who are influential ought to be at Albany—I shall be there. We are all here united on this subject, except the Martling¹ men. We have a good cause & let it not be our fault if it is not crowned with success.

I have endeavored to correct Porter's heresy but he is inflexible. I presume that he will not be a dangerous opponent in a case so clear.

Yours always sincerely,

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT *Esqr.*

CANAL MEETINGS BEING HELD.

BATAVIA Feb. 5, 1816

WILLIAM PEACOCK *Esquire*

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 31st ult. came to hand the 2d current. I have made an Extract of that part of it respecting Cushing &c. and transmitted it to Loomis.

You will observe in the *Advocate* that we have had a meeting to promote the success of the canal. Could you not have a similar one at Mayvil? . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

1. "DeWitt Clinton had to deal with two classes of men, naturally and almost relentlessly opposed to him—the friends of Burr and the Federalists. . . . On February 20 [1806] leading Clintonians banqueted the Burrrites at Dyde's Hotel in the suburbs of New York in celebration of their union. . . . Immediately, other Burrrites, joining the Lewisites at Martling's Long-room, a popular meeting-place, organized a protestant faction, afterward known as Martling Men, whose enmity was destined to follow Clinton to his downfall."—Alexander, "Political History of the State of New York," I. 152. The same authority speaks of the Martling Men as "now known as Tammany" (*Ib.* 170). This society, founded in 1789, may naturally have included the Martling Men and anti-Clintonians during the canal-construction period.

CANAL SENTIMENT IN BUFFALO IN 1816.

BATAVIA February 12, 1816.

JONAS HARRISON¹ *Esquire*,
Buffalo.

DEAR SIR: . . . I observe in the last *Buffalo Gazette* that the enterprising citizens of Buffalo are about making arrangements to express their sentiments of the grand canal question. This object of so much importance to so large a portion of the world I hope will receive their countenance and support; anything to the Niagara Journalists [*sic: Journal's*] correspondent to the contrary notwithstanding. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

BUFFALO HARBOR PROJECT IN 1816.

BATAVIA Feb. 12, 1816.

Messrs BENJAMIN CARYL, H. B. POTTER, J. HARRISON, R. B. HEACOCK, B. W. HOPKINS & CHARLES TOWNSEND, *Esquires*:

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your joint letter of the 22d ult. accompanied with a plan and project for improving and forming a harbour of Buffalo creek. That object has always been considered by me of primary importance to the agricultural and commercial prosperity of all those who inhabit the regions of the lake country, inasmuch as without a good safe harbour for vessels at or near the outlet of Lake Erie, from which with the lake the ingress and egress is without difficulty

1. Collector of Customs for the District of Niagara, afterwards Collector of Internal Revenue for the 25th collection district (all of New York west of the Genesee), 1813 or earlier, to 1819. His public spirit is shown in many letters, memorials, etc., relating to Buffalo harbor and other interests at an early period. See "A War-Time Letter-book, extracts from the correspondence of Jonas Harrison," etc., Buffalo Historical Society Publications, vol. V.

or detention, freight will be high in proportion to obstacles of this description vessels have to encounter. If ingress and egress can be had with facility within the mouth of Buffalo Creek for all vessels that navigate the lake at an expense not greater than funds can be raised for that object it is necessarily very desirable to attempt its accomplishment, not merely as it will tend to enhance the value of our property respectively at Buffalo but the general good that will result, and be diffused through such an immense extent as a convenient and safe harbour at the outlet of the lake would be the consequence.

It will be admitted that a more safe harbour than Buffalo Creek cannot be selected near the outlet of the lake, nor one from which vessels might take their departure with so much facility.

If this position is admitted the next object is in what manner can it be accomplished to answer the end in view with the least funds. The mode pointed out by you gentlemen as very particularly explained by the plan is on the principle which for very many years I have considered the most feasible, and indeed the only one. It must I think be conclusive that if by any means the creek aqueduct can be extended beyond the sand bar which now prevents ingress with the creek harbour the channel will be opened the first spring freshet, and will not again be closed; inasmuch as the artificial sides will prevent the sand from filling the channel, and consequently the harbour will be compleat.

I have carefully taken into consideration the plan suggested of constructing pieces of squared timber to be filled with stone of the dimensions mentioned in your explanation of the proposed plan, and I am apprehensive to prosecute this object in the manner pointed out would be attended with an expence that funds could not be obtained.

You mention the south pier extending from Ellicott's point to be 8 rods wide, and the north pier to be 4 rods wide; that the length at present to extend the piers may be sufficient at 25 perches.

If the project is effected by means of piers of the magnitude mentioned it will, if my calculation is correct, be

attended with an expence of near 200,000 Dollars made upon the following data.

A pier 8 rods wide and 25 rods long will contain 3300 superficial perches, which multiplied by 20, presuming the depth of the pier in the water and elevation above it will require one of that magnitude, the quantity of stone to fill such a pier will not be short of 66,000 perches, and admitting the North pier to require half that number of perches the whole aggregate will not be less than 100,000 perches, which if stone should be as high as when the gaol in Buffalo was erected viz \$1.25 per perch, the expence of that material to fill those piers will be \$125,000 exclusive of the squared timber proposed to be used for the construction of the piers.—a sum which I am persuaded could not be obtained for that purpose. The plan I have in view to adopt the ensuing season to extend the creek aqueduct beyond the sand bar by driving piles I am persuaded will answer the purpose contemplated by your project at an expence less than a cent to the Dollar.

I am therefore constrained to say that altho it would be very gratifying to unite with the enterprising citizens of Buffalo in all plans that appeared to me feasible which they might propose relative to constructing a harbour for vessels at Buffalo the magnitude of the piers suggested being in my opinion impracticable to be accomplished with any funds we could obtain I am impelled to decline a coöperation.

I am Gentlemen, with great respect, your most obedt
Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

P. S. Will you permit me to mention another subject of considerable importance to the interest of the inhabitants of the County of Niagara, as well as to the respectability of the county and that is the attempts making by certain inhabitants of the village of Lewiston to dismember its territory by the erection of a new county north of Tonawonta creek, which I am informed by the principal proprietor of Lewiston (Benjamin Barton) the inhabitants of your village have sanctioned or in other words that they

have not any objection to the measure. If a county shall be erected including the territory north of the Tonnawonta creek, will not the inhabitants south of Buffalo creek reservation with the same propriety require a county? and if that measure should also be sanctioned and obtained the now highly respectable county of Niagara will include little other territory than unsettled Indian lands.

“INCLINED PLAIN” VS. “WAVING PLAN.”

BATAVIA Feb. 14, 1816.

Honble CHAUNCEY LOOMIS,
Senate Chamber, Albany,

DEAR SIR: . . . I hope you will pass a law for laying out the Grand Canal and furnishing the Legislature with a profile map thereof, the line of country it may pass thro', exhibiting by sections, calculations of the expence that may attend the compleating each section; after which let there be a commission of review. With the information thus obtained the Legislature will be able to judge themselves of the practicability of the object. I think it might be well to lay out the canal on both principles; that is to say on the plan of an inclined plain and on the waving plan, (The latter plan I am persuaded is easily accomplished, and for a sum much less than mentioned in the New York petition; while the plan on the inclined plain I am persuaded, will cost much more, and be little if any better when accomplished: because locks where not more than two or three are contiguous are of very little disadvantage; but when you have 40 locks one after the other as would be the case at Lewiston the one fourth part of the Interest that would arise on the sum necessary to canal round the falls of Niagara and construct the locks would transport every article by land that would pass that way for forty centuries, provided the carrying place was open to free competitions. A Barrel of flour in that case would be conveyed across the carrying place for 18 Cents, which now pays 50 Cents to

the Lessees.)¹ and cause an estimate to be made of each route.—the expence would not be great to lay out the canal provided proper persons were commissioned to have these objects effected, and one of the greatest objects to guard against would be neither to send to France or England for Engineers, have no foreigners in the Business; they make everything cost double what it ought, and really have not as much knowledge of constructing objects of this nature as many Americans that may be obtained.

very respectfully your obedt Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

P. S. I hope a man who rendered as many services to his native State as De Witt Clinton has will not be suffered to be left out of this government, and be proscribed for less than nothing. Let him be legitimately nominated for governor. He will give the State a Dignity its wealth and importance deserves.

WILLIAM RUMSEY'S CANAL MISSION.

BATAVIA February 21, 1816

CHAUNCEY LOOMIS *Esquire*

Albany

DEAR SIR: Permit me to introduce to your civilities the bearer hereof William Rumsey Esquire. This gentleman was one of the committee appointed to draft a memorial to the Honorable the Legislature on the subject of the grand canal from the Lakes to the Hudson.

As this object is considered of immense importance to the advantage and prosperity of the western as well as almost every section of the State, if carried into effect, and as it has been suggested by our friends in the eastern section that it might conduce towards procuring such measures to be taken as would tend to the accomplishment of the object if some persons of respectable standing from

1. Mr. Ellicott here resumes the sentence which he broke off fourteen lines back! Chauncey Loomis was a Senator from the Western District.

each county through which the canal may pass friendly to the measure was present in Albany, and having been invited and requested personally to attend, which my avocations will not permit, Mr. Rumsey who has a knowledge of the subject, and feels an interest in its execution on account of the great public advantages to be derived, and whose avocations are such that he can attend without much inconvenience to himself has been selected and consents to be the bearer of the Memorial to be presented to your honorable body. Mr. Rumsey is also the bearer of Remonstrances against the division of the county as well as against the petition for levying a tax on the five western counties of this State for the opening and improving certain Roads therein maintained. This gentleman will of course advocate such measures with consultation and advice as may conduce to arrangements preparatory to the complete knowledge of the expence which might attend the cutting of the canal and will doubtless use his endeavours and aid as far as his situation will permit to prevent the projects of taxing the five western counties for the purpose aforesaid, and cutting up the counties, &c, &c.

It is desirable that the integrity of those counties should continue at least until they were sufficiently populated to render excisions necessary.

Any attention and civilities you may find it convenient to pay Mr. Rumsey will confer a favor on

Very respectfully Your obedt Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MR. ELLICOTT POINTS OUT PRACTICAL METHODS.

BATAVIA, February 21st, 1816.

DEWITT CLINTON, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR: I with pleasure acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3d instant.

I believe there is but one voice in this country in relation to the advantages that would flow from a canal navigation

from Lake Erie to the Hudson, although, as it is to be expected, there are many persons that seem to think such a project impracticable, and indeed upon some plans which might be devised for its execution, it is truly so; although by others, its completion is perfectly within the power of the State; and probably the canal could be so directed in its course, that even the country through which it might pass, would be competent to the completion of such sectional part. I am therefore impressed with the belief, from such reflections as have occurred to me on this subject, that the proper method to be pursued would be, to obtain an act from the legislature to appoint commissioners with power and funds to employ proper persons to explore and make a survey and level of a route, along which a canal should be directed, exhibiting, by means of a proper map and profile of the canal, the various depths required to be excavated, the aqueduct bridges to be erected, and the sites where locks should be constructed, with shafts sunk in various parts within the breadth contemplated for the canal, to ascertain the composition to be removed, whether clay, loam, sand, gravel, stone or rock. These objects being thus *practically* ascertained, it would be easy to make a calculation and estimate of the expense which would attend its excavation; after which, a succeeding legislature could judge, whether the ability of the state was competent to the undertaking.

My impression is, that this part of the main object might be accomplished at a small expense (comparatively speaking,) by pursuing systematic measures. I would recommend employing Americans solely, and avoiding foreigners; they know very little about the management and conducting of business economically in this country; and the truth is, the laying out a path for a canal, requires neither conjurors nor wizzards; practical nature is every thing that is necessary.

While I make these remarks with so much freedom and candor, it is not done with a view to obtain for myself, as you will perceive, any profitable employment in its prosecution. I have not any other object or wish than that the pro-

ject should be pursued in a practical way, commensurate with all the purposes for which canals are used for conveyance and transportation, with the least possible expense.

Your friend W. Rumsey, will use his exertions to promote this grand object. My avocations in the discharge of the duties which are involved in conducting my agency are so many that it is impossible for me to visit Albany, but I am persuaded Mr. Rumsey, who was one of the committee appointed to draft our memorial to the legislature, on the subject of the grand canal, and who is the bearer of the memorial to be handed to that honorable body, will more than supply my place were I present.

That complete success may attend your exertions in an object so beneficial to mankind as a complete water communication between the great western lakes and the Hudson River would be, is the sincere wish of,

with great respect and esteem,

your most obedient servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

CLINTON TO ELLICOTT.

ALBANY, 27th February, 1816.

DEAR SIR: I received your letter by Col. Rumsey, and also the well written memorial in favor of the Erie canal. This subject is in a fair way; I hope it will receive the support it deserves.

DE WITT CLINTON.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq*

CLINTON TO ELLICOTT.

ALBANY, 15th March, 1816.

DEAR SIR: I am still here on the subject of the Erie canal, in order to put down the terror about heavy taxation. I prepared the enclosed sketch for the joint committee,

which, at the request of Col. Rumsey, (who is active and useful) I have sent to you. . . .

DEWITT CLINTON.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

MR. ELLICOTT'S SUGGESTIONS FOR RAISING MONEY.

BATAVIA Mar 25, 1816

DEWITT CLINTON *Esquire*
Albany,

DEAR SIR: I with great pleasure acknowledge the receipt of your letter (and inclosures) of the 15th Instant. From those documents I should not suppose and indeed I do not believe there will be on the final Question a single dissenting vote in the Legislature against passing such laws as will be necessary to enable the Commissioners as immediately as the season is suitable to commence and prosecute the whole of this grand canal. Those Documents furnish practical information relating to the facility of excavating that part of the canal from Utica to the Seneca River, which I had not before seen. That section I was some how led to suppose would be attended with great expence. I am pleased to find however that it will be attended with little more in its execution than that of excavating a canal from Lake Erie to the Genesee River, which I am fully persuaded if the most eligible route shall be designated will not exceed in the average \$16000 pr mile, exclusive of locks and culverts. (This route however would not be that mentioned by the Commissioners, which I consider almost impracticable.)

The method of raising the monied means to defray the expence of this invaluable object at its first outset by indirect taxation I consider the most eligible; and from the view you have taken of the subject I see not the least difficulty of resorting to such objects of indirect taxation as will be amply compitent, until the whole line of canal shall be located, and every arrangement and object perfectly matured and well understood. This being accomplished

and from experimental knowledge ascertained the price or expence attending excavating the canal in the various depths and description of earth through which it may pass I see no reason why the excavating part of it might not *then* be as well effected in three years as to prolong it to ten, and at that epoch borrow a sufficient sum to defray all the expences that may arise during the said three years, the time I have allotted for its completion.

In addition to those objects of indirect taxation that you have mentioned I would suggest the propriety of taxing all Deeds given for lands, and all mortgages say, \$1.50 each. (They might be stamped) to be paid by the grantee; the expence of writing and printing to be bourne by the grantor. Persons in circumstances to purchase freehold estates could pay this tax with little inconvenience. It would probably produce \$40,000 pr annum.

I would propose a tax of 6 Cents on all Justices Warrants and subpoenas directed to defendants (stamped). This class of people might afford to pay a trifle for the pleasure of litigation. It would in all probability produce \$35,000 pr annum.

I would propose to increase the tax duty on the Onondaga Salt to 10 Cents pr Bushel (If the quantum of Salt you have mentioned should be made) it would produce a neat sum of about \$75,000 pr annum.

I would propose that the school fund should be applied to the canal until that object was effected. Its amount is of very little importance as to the promotion of common schools. They were as well conducted before they received the scanty pittance without the $\frac{1}{20}$ part of the trouble (as far as my observation extends) as they have been since and I think better; and I am already of the opinion that education will take care of itself hereafter as well as it has done heretofore without such auxiliaries, and I do not believe all the functions of government are better filled at this time with men of education than they were twenty five years ago; and my opinion is that the state of civilization now in the world is competent to ensure a sufficiency of education among the people for all purposes necessary without this

auxiliary school fund. I would however have no objection, indeed I should be in favor of such a measure, that is to say, after the canal shall be compleated appropriate the school fund to the endowment of colleges, where every science might be ably taught and improved upon. I am aware the above doctrine would not be popular among the people, or even to the Legislature; a majority of whom would consider such ideas fit only for some demon of an aristocrat, and those reflections are not intended for them but merely to intimate that if the school fund could be applied to the canal, that in my opinion its application would be much more to the advantage of the people.

Were it not that it may wear the appearance of levity I would propose a tax upon bachelors, married men and widows having no children, to be appropriated to the canal, that is to say, every bachelor indiscriminately above the age of 25 years to pay \$1 annually; those having in possession \$5000 in money and any description of property, and exceeding \$10,000 to pay \$2.50 annually. Those having in possession money or property \$10,000 and upwards to pay \$5 annually. This tax I presume would produce \$150,000.

Recapitulation.

Duties at auction.....	\$ 40,000
Steamboat passengers.....	30,000
Bank Stock on Amot. actually paid in.....	32,000
I would propose raising the duty on the Onondaga Salt to 10 Cents pr. Bushel.....	80,000
Pedlars	4,000
Solicitors &c.	16,000

Also

On every Deed & Mortgage executed \$1.....	40,000
I would propose 6 cents on every justice's warrant & sub- poena to Defendant.....	25,000
School fund appropriated to Canal say.....	50,000
Tax on bachelors appropriated to canal.....	150,000

\$467,000

Upon a supposition that one half of that sum only should be raised it would be sufficient to commence and prosecute the work.

I have read with pleasure the report of the Commissioners on the subject of the canal. I am pleased with it, inasmuch as I observe that the commissioners feel a disposition to prefer American Engineers to foreign. This is as it should be. It would be saying very little for this nation comprehending near half the population of Great Britain that it did not among all her sons possess one scientific, practical Engineer capable of designating the ground for a canal. Mr. Eddy has written to me on the subject and he appears to be of opinion that such is really the case. Could I be of that opinion as an American I should feel a Degradation for my country.

Very respectfully & sincerely

Your obedt Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

[P. S.] Should it be thought improper to tax married men and widows having no children, it cannot be deemed improper to lay a tax on bachelors for the canal. I am persuaded some will complain & married men will have no rights.

SUGGESTS JAS. W. STEVENS FOR COMMISSIONER.

BATAVIA April 1, 1816.

CHAUNCEY LOOMIS *Esquire,*
Albany,

DEAR SIR: Having understood that in case a commissioner should be appointed in this part of the State for the purpose of superintending canal affairs that it was your intention to propose Major Adams for that person, Permit me to say that altho no man was more averse to the outrageous transaction of turning Adams out of the Sheriffs office than I was, or that felt more indignant at the procedure that nevertheless as a compensation for the loss of that office it would be improper to place him in another that his education is not competent to the task.

Gentlemen holding such stations ought if obtainable not only to be liberally educated but ought to be men of science. It also requires a man who would be extremely tenacious about the public funds to see that no part was uselessly expended.

I do not know for my part a person more suitable than James W. Stevens. Mr. Stevens has the advantage of being liberally educated. His education is superior to Peter B. Porter, and much more a man of science and as temperate a man as ever lived, & in discharging a trust where public money is placed in his hands, there is no man more tenacious of having it applied in the most economical manner. There are few men better qualified for such a station than James W. Stevens. I hope therefore you will use your influence to obtain his appointment to that of a canal Commissioner. His appointment would be important inasmuch as those of the gentlemen belonging to the Holland Company Land office having a knowledge of the country through which a portion of the canal will pass, and having some knowledge of the science of canals could advise with him as to the most proper route and manner of effecting the object.

I am Sir very respectfully

your obedt Servant.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

URGING MR. STEVENS' APPOINTMENT.

BATAVIA April 1, 1816.

ARCHIBALD M. MCINTYRE¹ *Esquire,*
Albany,

DEAR SIR: Understanding that the Committee on the Canal Question have reported in favor of that object & pre-

1. Archibald McIntyre was at this time State Comptroller, in which office he continued from 1806 to 1821. By chapter 262, Laws of 1817, which created the Board of Commissioners of the Canal Fund, the Comptroller was not only made a member of the board, ex-officio, but the curious provision was made that a majority of the Commissioners, *with the Comptroller*, should constitute a quorum. No quorum of that board was therefore possible without the presence of the Comptroller. For an appreciative sketch of Mr. McIntyre's valuable service to the State, in canal and other matters, see Roberts' "A Century in the Comptroller's Office," Albany, 1897.

suming that a Commission will necessarily be appointed in this section of the State in the room of Peter B. Porter, who is destined of another mission, I take the liberty to mention to you that on the accomplishment of this object economically much will depend upon those who may have the Disbursement of the public funds, and presuming to have a competent knowledge of the characters in this part of the country suitable to be intrusted with such concerns, I take the liberty to solicit that you will use your influence that James W. Stevens may be appointed a Commissioner. Mr. Stevens has been liberally educated, is a gentleman of science, remarkable for his temperance, and I am persuaded there are few men more suitable for assisting to carry on the grand object than this gentleman. I am persuaded that should he be appointed a commissioner that he will be found by the other gentlemen an useful auxiliary.

Believe me with great respect

your obt Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

CLINTON TO ELLICOTT.

Confidential.

ALBANY, 4 April, 1816.

DEAR SIR: Accompanying this you will receive an interesting map relative to the country affected by the proposed canal. It is to be regretted that the scale is too small. I think that the canal is in a favorable train, and I hope that it will receive the sanction of the legislature in a few days. Your suggestions relative to the ways and means are interesting, and will, I have no doubt, be adopted, either on this or a future occasion. . . .

DE WITT CLINTON.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

CALL FOR FIRST MEETING OF THE CANAL COMMISSIONERS.

NEW YORK 22 April 1816

SIR: You are requested to attend a meeting of the Commissioners for the improvement of the Internal Navigation of the State at the City of New York on the seventeenth of may next at 12 o'Clock at the City Hotel.

New York is fixed upon as the place for the *first meeting* on account of some facilities which it affords for commencing the operations of the Board.

I am respectfully your most obed't Serv't

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT *Esq.*

Please to acknowledge the receipt of this.

MR. ELLICOTT'S REPLY.

BATAVIA, May 6, 1816.

DE WITT CLINTON *Esquire,*

DEAR SIR: Your favour of the 22d ult. announcing New York as the place for the first meeting of the commissioners named in the act for the improvement of the internal navigation of the State is at hand. It is uncertain whether my engagements with the Holland Company will permit an acceptance of the very important and unexpected appointment in such way as to be an active commissioner. At present Sir my avocations are of a nature, and indeed an indisposed state of health such as to prevent my attendance in the city of New York at the period mentioned. You will be good enough to take upon yourself to act in my behalf. Whatever arrangements shall be made or plans you may deem expedient to adopt for prosecuting the object will be subscribed to by

With great Regard

your most obedt Servt

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

P. S. I have in a hasty and cursory manner unofficially communicated my views of a plan preparatory for com-

mencing operations for carrying into effect the object of the Legislature (in part) in a letter to Mr. Eddy.

MR. ELLICOTT STATES HIS VIEWS AT LENGTH TO MR. EDDY.

BATAVIA May 6, 1816.

THOMAS EDDY,

RESPECTED FRIEND: . . . In reply to that part of your letter which mentions an expectation of my visiting New York the 17th Instant for the purpose of assisting to arrange the necessary plan to be adopted for the prosecution of the canal I have to say. That I have been and continue much indisposed: indeed so much so that I should not venture on so long a journey. My avocations also particularly at this period of the season, making out a statement of sales, receipts, and business of every description transacted during the preceding year, and to report to the Holland Company in Detail would render it very difficult for me to absent myself were I in perfect health.

I am also persuaded that the object so far as appears to be contemplated by the act of the Legislature may be accomplished with more facility and expedition under the immediate arrangement and direction of one acting person who would devote the whole of his time to the object than by five who would only casually attend to the business. Suppose for instance Mr. Clinton should take upon himself the arranging and conducting the operations he might occasionally require the opinion of the other commissioners regarding some ulterior measures, and also as to routes to be explored, and instruct his engineers as appeared most proper and expedient. To accomplish this object to the greatest advantage much exploration will be required of the country through which it is to be directed. Oftentimes thousands of Dollars in labor may be saved by a small deviation, and great deviations from the first suggested routes may become necessary.

I will take the liberty to mention you my ideas of an arrangement for the prosecution of this object, which if

adopted the information acquired by the legislature I am persuaded may be obtained. Presuming the first object will be to explore and lay down the line of canal from Rome to Lake Erie I would propose that at least two engineers should be employed, the one to explore, level and lay down the line of canal from Rome to the Seneca river, and the other from Lake Erie to the same place, and I am inclined to think it will require the whole season to accomplish these objects, and it may even a longer period.

Those engineers must be supplied with so many assistants and hands as they may find necessary. They ought as it were to be a community by themselves, without having in any manner to depend either for lodging or on receiving any accommodations from the Inhabitants where the line of canal would pass. They ought to be accommodated with marquees and regimental tents, to be furnished with provision and men or boys to prepare the victuals in the manner of surveying a large country. The acting commissioner might visit his engineers, and examine the country and the line of canal as it suited his convenience, receive their reports, and the information that such an examination of the country would afford them: and I repeat that I am persuaded much the better way is to leave the business under the control and management of one of the commissioners, who should make the contracts with and employ the engineers, surveyors, draftsmen &c. and superintend the business in person.

Should Mr. Clinton undertake the management and Direction I have no Doubt it will be accomplished. Any assistance that I could afford in aiding the exploring & laying out the canal from Lake Erie through the counties of Niagara and Genesee will be zealously given. But let the business be principally under the direction of one of the commissioners (say Mr. Clinton). Let him lay aside all other avocations and attend to it solely: otherwise I fear if the arrangements are to be made and conducted in that casual way things are generally managed where five persons all conduct it will fall through. One person I have always found for the conducting any enterprise is more to

be depended upon than two, three, four, five or a greater number all having equal powers, and admitting all equally capable. The acting commissioner ought to be amply compensated for his laborious services, because the fact is this canal will pass a considerable distance through a wilderness country, and of course a personal superintendence will not be so comfortable as reclining on a Sopha. The commissioner ought to have a private markee, carried along with the respective camp equipages of the engineers on the different routes of exploration, in order that when he should arrive at either of the respective engineer camps he might have his accommodation separate and apart from the engineers, when he would receive information and make out his instructions and directions. The truth is this business cannot be accomplished in a proper manner without constituting the persons who are to effect it a kind of separate moving community, and when the business shall be properly systematized the active commissioner after a little time would find a pleasure in carrying on his operations, and unless the business is methodized in this or some way not very dissimilar it never will be effected judicially. The manner Mr. Geddis was accommodated & the method he pursued would never answer for engineers to lay out a canal: the exploration must be carried on systematically. What business he performed in this quarter was done in such a hurry (I presume from the circumstances of having no accommodations) that he set up no monuments to be referred to in his field notes, from which levels might be connected in exploring other directions; so that in fact all his labour as it regards applying it to actually laying out a canal is useless.¹ The persons employed ought to have

1. In one of Joseph Ellicott's memorandum books preserved by the Buffalo Historical Society is an interesting series of entries regarding Mr. Geddes' surveys—Mr. Ellicott always writing the surveyor's name "Geddis." A few of these entries follow:

"July 12, 1816. Mr. Geddis reports the crown level between Oak Orchard Creek and Black Creek to be 6 feet higher than the swamps at each side and says that the crown level is a cedar swamp and that the water runs east and west out of said swamp into the creeks respectively called Oak Orchard and Black Creek. In carrying on the level of the same elevation of the crown level, he finds the swamp at Oak Orchard Road 8 feet below the crown level.

"Mr. Geddis finds the Eastern Swamp near Wadsworth on the Lewiston Road to be 13.66 below the Crown Level—the next west 15.19, the next 15.69,

good accommodations, and be well found. The expence of an engineer party will not be great.

I should suppose the following would be a liberal estimate, say at the extent

1 Engineer at \$5 pr. day is.....	\$5.00
2 pole bearers each \$1.50.....	3.00
2 chainmen \$1	2.00
2 axemen \$1	2.00
1 Packhorse man to act as Campman..	1.00
1 cook	1.00
1 Pack horse50
Provision pr. day for the party, say...	6.00

Total expence pr. day.....\$20.50

Should a surveyor be found necessary in addition to those mentioned the expence would be increased about \$4 pr. Day, which for five months would amount to no more than \$3675, and two such parties to \$7350.

There would however be the camp equipage to procure in addition, and doubtless some incidental expences would occur for sinking shafts along the canal line of the Depth of the canal to ascertain the best position of material and earth to be excavated. The chainman & axeman might occasionally be employed while the engineer would be laying down his field notes. It might not be necessary to employ a draftsman other than the engineer himself; he might be competent, and if not the draftsman would not be immediately required. Should it be inconvenient for one

& the Western Swamp the surface of the water under the Cossway [crossway] 17.75 below the crown level. . . .

"Mr. Geddis found the summit of the elevation in the Indian Road which leads from Wadsworths to the Indian Village descends to the Intervale land near Tonnawanta creek to be 2.22 feet more elevated than the Crown Level. The descent he says is abrupt down a gravelly sandy point to a place which has the appearance of formerly being the Bed of Tonnawanto Creek which has been deserted by the creek.

"Mr. Geddis continued the level to the creek and found the surface of the water in the creek at the crossing to be 14.96 below the Crown Level. The place where he intersected the creek was about east from the village. . . .

"Mr. Geddis observed by critical trial that the water [in Tonawanda creek] moved with the velocity of 99 feet pr. Minuet, which would fill a lock 75 by 12.8 feet deep in 1'.73 hundredths. . . ."

of the commissioners to take the sole charge of conducting this object, I think it probable if I could be furnished with a proper instrument for carrying on the levels I could organize a levelling and exploring party to trace a line for the canal from Lake Erie the Genesee river and possibly to the Seneca river, provided I could prevail upon one of my assistants to undertake. I will not however pretend to say the precise location for the canal, with an exact profile of the country it would pass over could be accomplished by the period required by the act, because it will be attended with much labor, and it will be a business that cannot be hurried. This will easily be seen on reflecting that to estimate the precise expence of excavation, the concavity and convexity of the surface over which the canal may pass must be truly taken; after which it may be laid down with geometrical precision, and when thus accomplished the expence of excavation may be estimated within a few Dollars. My mentioning Mr. Clinton as the principal Superintendent arises from the circumstance of the great interest he has taken in the canal.

You will permit me to solicit that you will be good enough to mention these ideas to Mr. Clinton, and endeavor to prevail upon him to undertake the active management of the business. Were I myself equally competent my engagements with the Holland Company are of such a nature as to prevent my absenting myself for any length of time from the Purchase without first obtaining permission.

Believe me with great respect

Thy friend

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THE CANAL IDEA HELPS LAND SALES.

BATAVIA May 13, 1816.

PAUL BUSTI *Esquire,*
Philadelphia,

MY DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 23d ult. is at hand.
. . . As it relates to the Bank of Niagara and the canal

you may possibly suppose on seeing my name as a commissioner for opening the Books for subscription to the bank and one of the commissioners named in the act for laying out the Canal that I solicited those appointments. Should this be the case you will allow me to assure you the very reverse was the fact. I informed the friends of the bank bill when they affixed my name in the act that I could not accept of the appointment, and requested that they would insert some other name, which they declined doing, giving as a reason that it would be optional with me to serve or otherwise, and that my name was inserted with an idea that it might be useful in procuring the act.

As relates to the canal I recommended in case a commissioner should be located in this quarter the name of another gentleman for that station much more suitable in my opinion than myself. Indeed I had not the most distant expectation of being named as a commissioner. However as to any injury which either object may do I am not apprehensive that such will be found to be the case. . . .

As relates to the canal I do not see any possible injury that can be sustained by that measure. If it should never be compleated the money that may be expended in its prosecution will only be changed into other hands, and if men are employed to excavate it through the Holland Purchase they will want provision, and the supply of their wants will afford a small market for part of your settlers, and be the means of promoting industry among them for the profits to be derived by the sale of their agricultural productions. Besides from the context of your letter of the 15th February ult. I was led to suppose you were in favor of the canal, as you observed in a jocular way (after making some preliminary remarks) that "Roads and Canals whenever opened will be beneficial to the lands, and provided the Company has not to pay the piper you shall never oppose the pleasure of the settlers of running a race over a new Road, and having a rowe Match on a Canal or pond." As to myself I am persuaded the mere idea of a canal is beneficial to the sale of these lands. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

TO MYRON HOLLEY.

BATAVIA June 16, 1816.

MYRON HOLLEY,¹ *Esquire*,
Canandaigua.

DEAR SIR: I have the pleasure to acknowledge the Receipt of your letter of the 13th Instant and have to confirm to you what I mentioned in my letter to Mr. Clinton that my avocations on account of duties I was under obligations to perform for the Holland Company would not permit me to act in capacity of an active commissioner. You will therefore please to take upon yourself the task of furnishing the Engineer with a surveyor to attend him. On your arrival at this place I will be ready to confer with you as to the most proper method of forwarding the business relating to the canal, and hope you may find it convenient to conduct the operations in person. Meantime with great regard I am

Your obedt Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MR. CLINTON INSPECTS THE ROUTE.

ALBANY 18 August 1816

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

MY DEAR SIR: I arrived at this place this morning & have the pleasure of assuring you that I witnessed on the whole route a general sentiment in favor of the Erie Canal. We had an interview with Geddes in the Town of Pittsford. We walked with him over the difficult grounds at the Irondequoit Valley and we examined the proposed passage over the Genesee river and upon the whole we are entirely satisfied that the impediments will fall short of anticipation.

We had a conference with Mr. Wright at Manlius Square: He had proceeded 34 miles: His first level will

1. Myron Holley had been appointed a canal commissioner in 1816, and was the first treasurer of the board. In that year he represented Ontario County in the Assembly, and again in 1820-21.

extend as far west as Salina 45 miles—the second after a fall of 16 feet 30 miles—then after one canal he will go on one level to the Seneca river. He will experience no embarrassments from swamps or deep cuttings, and the supply of water will be exuberant.

Mr. Charles C. Brodhead assisted by Dr. Noyes of Union College will run & designate the line from Rome Eastward.

It will give me great pleasure to hear from you. I shall in company with Genl V Rensselaer and Mr. Young examine the route of the Champlain canal. A letter directed to this place will reach me in due season.

If your surveyors can without any inconvenience collect specimens of rare plants & minerals for the Philosophical Society of New York it may be of service to the cause of science. The plants must be inserted between leaves of paper and kept as dry as possible.

My best compliments to the Representative and Mr. Evans and be assured of my sincere regard

DE WITT CLINTON.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esq.*

DETAILS OF THE SURVEY.

PALMYRA, August 18th, 1816.

DEAR SIR: I am well pleased to learn that the route on the South &c of the Tonewanta Swamp is to be done under your particular direction. The levelling instrument which I use and have used so much, I had put much confidence in as to its remaining true, and have been in the habit of using it long without testing its accuracy. But (owing to the loss of one of the small screws, I suppose) found when I tried it west of Blodgets Creek to be very much out of true, more than I had ever found it before so that I have little confidence in my level between the Transit line and the new road across the Swamp to the Oak Orchard mills. From my minutes of the levelling west of said road I will



copy some of the hubs drove or stumps cut down by which you can compare our levels. North west of Driggs' field cut a flatt spot on the root of a Cedar marked C. This spot is level with the hub on the Transit line if there had been no error as above spoken of.

Nearly north of the next house west of the Driggs the top of a stone in a small stream north of a Maple marked D and 2 Chs west of Carey's road into the Swamp .16 of a foot too low. By a Bass marked E in a Brook level.

A hub drove to the Transit line level, near the west line of Township by an Ash marked F.

A hub by a Bass marked H west of the Township line is 1.07 feet too high.

Level, on a spot on the root of a Beech marked I (on line 66 Chs west of H.)

West side of the Lewistown Road a spot on the root of a Beech *level*. Beech marked with 3 Lozenges  and a Maple in the Road thus with 

Mr. Holley has been out with us now [a] few days but now returned home.

On a more particular examination of the country than ever had been made before, I find that remarkable swamp out of which the Rondequot and Mud Creek waters empty, to be some lower on the north side of it than on the south side. I have taken a level which requires 4 feet of the very summit of this swamp to be cut down, and thus I cross the Rondequot Creek so that the water in the canal will be but 60.66-100 feet higher than the water below. A much greater advantage by lowering this level, is obtained on entering the Mud Creek valley, to wit, the surface of Gannetts mill Pond (just above) is 114-100 foot higher than the surface of the canal.

Into this mill Pond the Canandarque outlet may be made to run, and the carrying the Canandarque waters over Mud Creek on an Aqueduct bridge (which I had always expected), is saved. The feeder from Gannett's mill pond to the canal will not be quite half a mile long. I have found

so little fall in this swamp of between 7 and 8 miles long, that am in hopes you will not find so much fall in the Tonnewanta swamp as came out according to my inaccurate level; the east end of which I was so dissatisfied with that I always intended going over it again.

I left off last night something over 3 miles below Palmyra village. Have located 4 locks all very much to my mind as to [*rest of MS. missing.*]

Evans MSS. Though incomplete, it is plain that this letter was written by William Peacock to Joseph Ellicott. "Rondequot" is of course the Irondequoit of today, and "Canandarque" is Canandaigua.

MR. ELLICOTT LAYS OUT AN EXPERIMENTAL ROUTE.

BATAVIA, Aug. 26, 1816.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia,

MY DEAR SIR: . . . Among the causes that prevents me from leaving this place in the ensuing month is that the other canal commissioners have charged me with the superintendence of laying out one of the proposed routes of experiment for the canal in its passage through the Lands of the Holland Company. This object together with having to superintend occasionally the persons charged with the erection of an house for the present resident Agents use, as also the Company's affairs keeps me pretty much in duty.

. . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT TO THE COMMISSIONERS.

BATAVIA, Aug. 26, 1816.

GENTLEMEN: I transmit enclosed two letters on the subject of the Canal, One from the President of the Canal Commissioners, and the other from Engineer Geddis, by which you will observe the Engineer seems to doubt the

accuracy of the level he took from the transit line to Tonawanta. You will have an opportunity of testing its correctness by referring to some of the levels he has established. Be pleased to write me by the return of the bearer, the Progress you are making, the feasibility of the country through which you pass for canaling, & such other information as may be convenient to afford.

Mean time

With great respect Your obed't Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT

N. B. Be pleased to preserve the enclosed letter from
Clinton & Geddis J. E.

Messrs. B. ELLICOTT & W. PEACOCK

Evans MS.

DETAILS DISCUSSED WITH MR. CLINTON.

BATAVIA Sep. 2d 1816.

DE WITT CLINTON, *Esquire*,

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 18th ult. is at hand. The arrangements the commissioners have made in employing and organizing a party to carry on a level eastward from Rome is certainly very proper, inasmuch as I am persuaded unless more engineers should be employed than those first engaged, the objects contemplated by the Legislature to be performed the present season could not be accomplished.

Agreeably to the arrangement made at the commissioners' meeting at Buffalo I have organized a party to effect a level of the southern route, and the Engineer Mr. Peacock,¹ and surveyor A. A. Ellicott² are now on that business.

I deemed it proper in order to obtain information of the profile and extent of the summit level between Tonawanta

1. William Peacock, one of the early surveyors for the Holland Land Co., at one time a clerk in the office at Batavia, was in 1810 appointed local agent for the company at Mayville, with the subsequent history of which place his name is prominent. It was he who made the first accurate survey of Buffalo harbor. His wife was a niece of Joseph Ellicott.

2. Joseph Ellicott's nephew, the oldest son of his brother Andrew.

Swamp and Black creek waters (not being in possession of Mr. Geddis's [Geddes'] notes) to instruct the Engineer to make that level previous to extending his line westward. Mr. Peacock has accomplished that object, and is now extending his line towards Tonnawonta Creek.

I flatter myself that the care and attention with which this level will be accomplished the most satisfactory information will be obtained. I shall write you occasionally as the work progresses.

I hope our truly agreeable & worthy colleague Mr. Young has recovered from the indisposition with which he was affected when you took your departure at Warren's on the Ridge Road. Please give him my best respects & believe me very truly with great regard

Your obed't Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

PEACOCK TO ELLICOTT.

CAMP WEST OF OAK ORCHARD ROAD, 1 MILE,
Sept. 8th, 1816.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esquire*,
Batavia.

MY DEAR SIR: Wishing to give you information of our progress in extending the Level Line Westward as frequent as time will admit, I now do myself the pleasure of enclosing to you the notes of the Level taken west from the Oak Orchard Road. In that distance no obstacle presents itself to carry the Canal on the Transit Line Level, as the slope of Land lays in such a position that the Level Line may be carried up or down on this slope, as will always bring the Level in the proper place & at the same time run nearly in a direct rout. There is more of those round detached stone discovered on and in the Earth west of the road, than what was found east from the road. At the end of Station No. 60 and about 10 or 15 rods west, there is a fine Brook of water, coming into the Swamp, from the

South west. No such Brook is marked on the map in the office.

Mean time believe most

Respectfully yours

WILLIAM PEACOCK.

Evans MSS.

MR. BUSTI STILL INCREDULOUS.

PHILADELPHIA 19th September 1816.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*,
Batavia,

DEAR SIR: . . . The new commissioners of the State having charged you with the care of superintending that part of the Dutch Territory where the proposed Canal might more advantageously be led through I expect that from this circumstance you'll be enabled to give me early information of the courses & windings of the excavation, whether it is seriously intended to make a begin with that herculean work and when. I am eager to know the minutest particulars about it. For as the undertaking (if really meant by the State) must have the greatest influence on the value of our lands, and vastly contribute not only to the acceleration of sales but equally so to the increase of the receipts at your office I am desirous to concur liberally with my mite of assistance in that work. In fixing my final determination on the kind of donation the Dutch Companies should offer your advice is necessary and whilst I am expecting you'll on this score give me your ideas I beg you to consider whether it would not be adviceable to hold all lands which might be most benefited by the canal at much higher prices or even to suspend their sale at any. The latter seems to me the best of the two propositions. Should you think that the Commissioners would prefer an alternate grant of lots bordering on the Canal to the one of a distant tract as formerly was accepted in preference. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

CLINTON SANGUINE OF SUCCESS.

ALBANY 20 Sept 1816

MY DEAR SIR: . . . I have just finished my survey of the Northern Canal and consider its practicability beyond all manner of doubt. The people of the North are very desirous to see this work executed and are willing that the Western Canal shall proceed *pari passu*.

It may be satisfactory to you to learn that the Hudson at Fort Edward is 22 feet higher than Lake Champlain and that Lake George is 225 feet higher at its outlet than Champlain. . . .

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT *Esqr.*

HOLLAND LAND COMPANY'S CANAL DONATION.

BATAVIA Octo. 15, 1816.

PAUL BUSTI *Esquire,*
Philadelphia

MY DEAR SIR: I with great pleasure acknowledge the receipt of your very agreeable favor of the 19th ult. which duly came to hand. It is not necessary for the Agent General to make apologies for delaying the acknowledgment of the receipt of his resident Agents letters; it is sufficient for him to receive them when your convenience finds the least interruption in writing.

I perfectly agree with you as to the manner of making Donations of lands to the Canal. It is conformable to your old plan, & is evidently the just one; and I am no less happy that I have anticipated the instructions you have given of suspending the sales of land when I conceive it most probable the excavation may be made.

In respect to subscribing to the canal it appears to me it will be in good time when the path for the canal shall be delineated on the ground, and precise statements founded on actual information obtained by survey and level of the expence which might attend such an undertaking; because

if it should be found that the expence would be too enormously great for the State and individuals to bear, prudence would dictate that it would be best to make little or no subscription, in order that the ultimate loss in the event of the canal being undertaken and not effected might be as small as possible.

Two separate routes are to be explored surveyed and levelled for the passage of the canal through the Holland Purchase; after the accomplishment of which the commissioners will have to determine on the most practicable and most beneficial one.

That route which is now exploring will pass through the 13th Tier of Townships, and principally thro' unsold land, and is enjoined on myself to superintend the Direction of which when compleated I will furnish you with a profile and topographical map of the route, with such other information as will enable you to form an opinion of the practicability of making the excavation, and how far you may wish to subscribe, provided that line shall be adopted.

The other route to be explored and levelled will pass northwardly from Tonnawonta creek thro' Townships 13 & 14 to the North side of the great Slope, and from thence eastwardly between said great Slope and the Ridge Road. Both routes however by a resolve of the commissioners take their departure at one and the same place, that is to say, the canal to commence on the North side of Buffalo creek near New Amsterdam. I think the former one will be adopted by the commissioners, provided there shall be sufficient water to supply lockage from and to the upper level which however is rather problematical, as all the streams during the summer and autumnal months that can be conveyed to the upper level become very scanty of water; while the latter will have Lake Erie flowing into Buffalo Creek for its reservoir, and of course if the former cannot receive a sufficient supply of water the latter route must be adopted; but if this is the alternative my fears are from the ideas I have of the roughness of that route, that the expence to excavate the canal will be so enormously great that means cannot be obtained to accomplish it. It may however be otherwise.

On a minute examination of the line along which a level would be made the country might present an aspect altogether different from my present ideas. At all events however I would recommend the postponement of any subscription until every practicable information was first obtained. Such are my present impressions on this business, which however subsequent circumstances may change, and in such an event I shall advise you of the cause of such change of mind. . . .

Your obed't Servant.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

PROGRESS OF FIELD WORK REPORTED.

BATAVIA Octo 24, 1816.

SAMUEL YOUNG *Esquire*,

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 4th Instant announcing a meeting of the Canal Commissioners at Schenectady on the 28th was received on the 15th. I should be really happy were it in my power consistent with other engagements to attend in ascertaining the site where the Canal would most beneficially unite with the Hudson.

My avocations at this time however are such as would render it so extremely inconvenient to absent myself so long from my duties here as I apprehend the exploration of the country preparatory to fixing on so important a point may require that I shall reluctantly be compelled to forego that satisfaction. It is very gratifying to learn from you that the part of the country over which you have examined, is so formed by nature as to facilitate the easy excavation of the intended Canal uniting the navigation of the lakes George & Champlain with that of the Hudson.

As it respects the facility with which a canal may be made the northern route thro' the counties of Niagara & Genesee I can say nothing further than that I have seen and conversed with Mr. Johnston the surveyor under the direction of Engineer Geddis, who mentioned that the obstacles which were supposed to be insurmountable did not exist, as

on strict examination it was found that a canal might be excavated that route with facility, and that the most difficult place (which however the Gentleman did not appear to think of much magnitude) would be the formation of an embankment and aqueduct Bridge over Sandy creek of upwards of 70 feet elevation and near a quarter of a mile in length. Having however not seen any of the notes of the actual level taken whereby a view of the make and shape of the country would be had and which would be necessary to enable me to form a correct opinion, the verbal information of the surveyor is insufficient to expel the whole of my doubts as it relates to that route, and more particularly when the surveyor speaking of an embankment and aqueduct bridge to be erected over Sandy creek of upwards of 70 feet in elevation and nearly a quarter of a mile in length, which he did not appear to consider of much importance, I am at a loss to know what obstacle that Gentleman would consider otherwise. True it is not insurmountable.

As it relates to the progress with which you wish to be made acquainted, making by the Engineer and party organized by myself in exploring what was termed the southern route, I have to remark that as to passing over extended surface my Engineer will not bear a comparison with Engineer Geddis. However I have the satisfaction to believe that his level and work will bear the test of scrutiny and will be found faithful, precise, and such as to deserve the public confidence.

The object given me in charge to superintend was to cause a level and exploration of the summit ground extending from the waters of Black creek, which falls into the Genesee River on the east and Tonawonta creek, which falls into the Niagara River on the west, to be made to ascertain the practicability of making a canal that route, and from thence to ascertain the most practicable route for a continuation of the canal to Buffalo creek, near its junction with Lake Erie. In pursuance of that arrangement I have the satisfaction to report the first part of the object to be mainly accomplished, to wit an accurate horizontal line has been produced along the whole course of the summit eleva-

tion from Black creek to Tonnawonta creek, and such lateral levels taken as subsequently to render the surveying and laying off the actual ground to be excavated with much precision and exactitude. The performing of levels when the line produced is continued over ground of nearly the same horizontal elevation necessarily requires more time to accomplish than when the line is carried in a direct course over the swells or undulations of the face of the country; but when the former method is pursued the most satisfactory information of the entire practicability of making the canal is not only obtained, but all the windings, which will necessarily be made in it in its progress are observed, as well as furnishing nearly the requisite information to enable a tolerable accurate estimate to be made of the expence, which may be incurred in its excavation.

The upper level extending from Black creek to Tonnawonta creek has been accomplished in this way & will probably be near 25 miles in length, and thro' that whole distance not a solitary aqueduct bridge will be necessary; no deep cutting required, or embankments of much elevation to be made. Probably the whole extent of the canal in its passage over the upper level will not require more labor than that of cutting an average depth of four feet at the extent, and I am persuaded the meanderings will not increase the distance beyond that of a straight line to be greater than one mile in 8 or 10 miles.

On the Engineer's arrival at Tonnawonta creek I instructed him to spend one whole week in gauging the quantity of water flowing thereon; an object very important to be ascertained any season, but particularly the present on account of its extreme dryness; the water flowing in the creek being less in quantity than ever before observed by the Indians, as they say, residing near where the level intersects the bank of the creek. I was also induced to request him to continue his observations for one whole week on account of the obstruction of the water in its passage down the creek by mill dams, the water out of which when discharged, if the creek should be gauged at that time, might give a result greater than the real quantity of water flowing

in the creek, and on the other hand if gauged at the time when the several mill dams were all closed the result might be a less quantity than the actual supply and I presume the mean of one week's gauging would afford tolerable accurate information of the actual supply of water that might be expected from this creek. In every point of view I considered it all important to obtain a correct knowledge of this fact inasmuch as if there shall not be sufficient water flowing in Tonnawonta creek for the main supply it matters not with what facility and cheapness the canal on this route could be excavated; for without a sufficient supply of water the canal itself if formed would be even worse than useless.

In a dispatch received from the Engineer he forwarded me a transcript of his notes taken of the length, depth and velocity of the water in different sections of Tonnawonta creek for three days taken three times a day, morning noon and evening on the 10, 11 & 12th instand inclusive; from which I have made an estimate of the mean quantity of water the creek would have supplied during that period, and find it to amount to $2991\frac{72}{100}$ cubic feet pr. minute. As there was a considerable difference in the depths of water across the creek in the sections where the observations were taken the engineer was about scraping out a trough between the banks of the creek which would have for its object a uniformity in depth of water thro' the whole section to be gauged, which it is presumed will be productive of such a uniformity in the velocity of the current where gauged as to make a result such as might be relied on.

If the foregoing shall prove nearly correct as to the supply of water pr. minute, this creek without the aid of other streams which intersect the summit level canal would be sufficient to fill a lock 75 feet in length, 16 in breadth and 12 feet in depth in less than 4 minutes and 50 seconds, which in 24 hours would admit the passage through the locks at each end of the summit canal respectively to the number of 148 boats.

The engineer will, after having ascertained the length of the feeder, which will be required to introduce the waters of the creek in the upper level, proceed to explore and make

levels of the descending canal from the western termination of the upper level to the head of still water towards the mouth of Tonawonta creek; after which he will proceed to Buffalo creek and ascertain, by a level from thence to the head of still water in Tonawonta creek, the elevation of the water in Buffalo creek above that of still water in Tonawonta Creek aforesaid, which will afford the necessary information to estimate the number of locks necessary to descend from the summit level to lake Erie & vice versa.

Those objects accomplished maps and plans exhibiting profiles of the face of the country where leveled will be made out together with all the field notes taken in performing those objects and handed over to the commissioners, who will by information thus afforded be able to form a tolerable correct opinion of the practicability or impracticability of constructing the canal this route.

Before closing this communication it may be proper to mention that Engineer Geddis on understanding that it was given in charge to me to employ an Engineer and cause a level to be made from Black creek to Tonawonta, and from thence to Buffalo forwarded a communication with some notes describing where he had set level pegs &c and mentioning his suspicions that when he performed that work that his instrument was defective. It is therefore but doing justice to Engineer Geddis to say that his suspicions of the inaccuracy of his levels were correct, or that the level made by my Engineer is incorrect, which we are persuaded is not the case, having so many opportunities to test its accuracy, and in no one instance in closing levels of three miles in extent was found a greater variation than $\frac{4}{10}$ of an inch: whereas the difference between Engineer Geddis's level and that of my engineer was found on connecting with his level pegs to be from 8 to 12 feet.

I am Sir with great consideration

Your most obed't Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THRIFTY MR. BUSTI STILL DOUBTS.

PHILADELPHIA 31st October 1816.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*
Batavia,

DEAR SIR: . . . The magnitude of the undertaking of the Canal is so great that it is impossible for me to believe that the work will ever be perfected. Therefore willing as I am to convince the State of the just deference I pay to the wishes of the sovereign people and to contribute to the execution of a favorite project I have always thought incumbent upon me to limit the donations of the H. L. C. to the condition of being effective only in the case that the navigation be opened from the lake to the Hudson. I conceive really that the territory of our principals would receive no benefit from the digging of [a] Canal that should not open a thoroughfare to that river. The intermediate counties do not want any supplies from the Genesee. On this score we seem to differ in our opinions about my subscribing, for as you say, that if the work is undertaken against the probability of perfecting it on account of the excessiveness of the expence you would advise to make meagre donations in order to lessen the loss. Whereas I adhere to the principle of making none, if such is to be the termination of a useless scheme. There is no necessity for the present to determine finally this question between us. We'll leave it for decision when it shall be fixed what direction the Canal shall to have. Were I called to vote for any of the two mentioned in your letter I would undoubtedly decide for the southern one. If no insurmountable obstacles are in way every one will not hesitate to say that this course is by far preferable to the northern beyond the ridge. Being more central it would benefit a greater extent of the country and in case of war with the quarrelsome English be more secure from mischievous attacks. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

RESULTS OF ENGINEER PEACOCK'S WORK.

BATAVIA Nov. 13, 1816.

Honble DE WITT CLINTON,

DEAR SIR: I have now the satisfaction to report to you that Engineer Peacock has ascertained the height of the Transit line level (so called) above the surface of the water of Lake Erie at Buffalo Creek to be $74\frac{79}{100}$ feet, as follows:

The elevation of the Transit line level above the level water of Tonawonta Creek with the Niagara River he found to be. $79\frac{48}{100}$ feet
 The elevation of Lake Erie level at Buffalo Creek above the aforesaid level water in Tonawonta Creek he found to be. $4\frac{69}{100}$ "
 Leaving the whole elevation of the Transit line level above the Lake Erie level. . . . $74\frac{79}{100}$ "

The engineer found the face of the country from the western termination of the said Transit line level to the head of still water aforesaid, more even than that over which the upper level canal would pass. Few embankments would be required, and not any of an elevation greater than 8 or 10 feet, and those that might be required only a few perches in extent, not any ledges of rocks to be excavated through, and few stone of any Description met with in carrying on his level. The only object now to be accomplished to enable a tolerable correct opinion to be formed of this route is to ascertain whether Spring & Biglow's [Bigelow's] creek, branches of Black Creek, can be conveyed into the upper level.

The Engineer will go on this service in a few days.

With great respect I have the honor to be

Your obed't Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

TERMS OF THE HOLLAND LAND COMPANY'S CANAL GRANT.

BATAVIA Nov. 27, 1816

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia,

MY DEAR SIR: . . . As it relates to the canal subscription, I am persuaded that we do not materially disagree. I presume your Intention is to make the subscription a conditional one bona fide only in case the Canal is compleated through its whole extent from the Hudson to Lake Erie, and to confine the subscription merely to a portion of the lands that may belong to the Company adjoining the site, when it is determined upon, and the canal actually laid off. If this manner of subscribing accords with your views we are not very different in our ideas upon the subject; and as the surveys and levels which I have directed to be made are nearly compleated after which the maps and plans necessary for making out the report to the commissioners will be prepared, you will permit me to suggest whether it would not on presenting the maps, field notes &c., to the commissioners be a proper time to make the offer of the conditional Donation upon the terms you may deem proper. With your permission I will suggest some ideas, which on a cursory view of the subject appears to me might probably answer and be advantageous to the Holland Company, and I am impressed with an opinion could not in any event be very injurious, and

First. Suppose a conditional Donation should be made of the lands belonging to the Company, which the canal and towpaths should embrace, to be a bona fide grant in case the canal should be compleated in twenty five years, otherwise not.

Second. All lands belonging to the Company adjoining the canal when it shall be actually laid off to be surveyed into lots of from 40 perches to 80 perches in breadth and where circumstances will admit to be one mile in depth. Say every alternate or every third lot to be granted to the canal on the same conditions as above. (In the original or former

offer every other lot was proposed to be conditionally donated.)

Third. That all lands so proposed to be donated shall be free from all taxation to the Company during the said 25 years, or as long as the said lands shall be held in expectancy.

Fourth. That if the canal should be completed on or before the expiration of twenty five years, and the lands so donated sold by the State or canal commissioners, the avails thereof so far as it should refund the expenditures made in constructing or excavating the canal through the lands of the Holland Company so much of the said canal to be free from all toll other than such sum or sums as should be necessary to keep such part of said canal in repair; That is to say, if the lands should be sold for a sum that would refund the original expences of excavating 15 miles that distance to be free from all toll excepting such as might be necessary for keeping the canal in repair; and the money to be employed in the same manner, and on the same principles for a greater or less distance as the lands so donated when sold might produce.

From the levels taken of the route which I undertook to have explored, called the southern route, I am fully impressed with the belief that a canal might be excavated for an expence much less than the expence which is required in making such stoned Turnpike Roads as those leading from the cities of Philadelphia & Baltimore. The tract of country through which the canal would be drawn between the Niagara and Genesee Rivers, a distance of between 70 & 80 miles, is remarkable for its horizontal position. It is found from actual, and I am persuaded accurate levels taken, that the greatest summit elevation above the surface of the water of lake Erie at Buffalo creek is less than 75 feet, and that this summit level which will be nearly 25 miles including all the meanders of the canal lies between a point about three miles east of the east line of Township No. 13, Range 4. It is also ascertained throughout this distance there will not require any deeper cuttings than from 6 to 10 feet, and no greater embankments than of those elevations, and not

any adequate bridges. For the greater portion of the above distance, the canal may be so laid (if 6 feet water shall be deemed of sufficient depth) that not more than three feet in depth will be necessary to excavate, inasmuch as the earth taken out in making such a trough would constitute the upper part of the banks & towing path.

In like manner the canal might be laid out from the western extent of the summit level to the mouth of Tonnawonta creek; the country from that point descending in such manner as to admit a canal to be excavated with the greatest facility; and from the mouth of Tonnawonta creek to Buffalo Creek along the Bank of the Niagara very few difficulties are met with. The whole elevation of the surface of the water in lake Erie above the surface of the water at the mouth of Tonnawonta Creek has been found to be 4 feet and one half of a foot. Hence it seems there is very little descent in the waters of Niagara River between the bottom of the rapids at the outlet of Lake Erie and the mouth of Tonnawonta Creek, probably not to exceed an inch to the mile. It has generally been supposed as the current in the river is pretty strong that the descent of the river was more than it has been found actually to be. Among the objections that have been raised against the southern route was an idea that there was not sufficient water that could be conducted into the summit level canal for the consumption of the locks descending at each end. This objection has been proved altogether fallacious, as Tonnawonta Creek at a point 2 miles above Tonnawonta Indian village, from whence the feeder would take its departure to be conducted to the summit level canal, has an abundant supply of water, even if no other water could be had. This however is not the case, as there are many brooks and some streams that turn grist and saw mills to be had in addition; of course there will not be any want of a sufficient supply of water for the southern route, and I am persuaded the expence that would attend making the canal the southern route would be centum pr. centum less than would attend cutting the canal on the Northern route, and a very great advantage would result to the country by

directing the canal further interior, as you have so justly observed, and another advantage would be if the canal was directed the southern route it would pass for a considerable part of the distance through lands, which have not been sold by the Company; of course their Donation upon the terms of subscribing every other lot to the canal would be increased unless it was deemed that every third lot was sufficient for them to donate, and as the lands belonging to the Company the Northern route are principally sold, the Company could not gain much by subscribing to a canal not passing through their lands, as you have also justly observed. Should it be determined to adopt the southern route, as it will pass through a tract of country, which has not been sold on account of being much intersected with swamps I presume the canal would make it saleable, and probably in such an event one half of the land adjoining the Canal would bring more money by three fold after the Canal should be finished than the whole will bring if the canal is not directed that way.

You will be good enough when you have made up your mind on this subject to inform me what subscription may be expected from the Holland Company & on what terms & principles such subscription will be made. . . .

With great respect and regard

I am very truly your obed't Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MR. ELLICOTT ADVOCATES NATIONAL HELP FOR THE CANAL.

BATAVIA Dec. 30, 1816.

Honorable MICAH BROOKS¹ *Esquire*,

DEAR SIR: I with great pleasure acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, which came to hand by

1. Micah Brooks, a native of Connecticut, was a pioneer of East Bloomfield, Ontario County, where he settled in 1799. For several years he was one of the associate judges of Common Pleas. He was a member of the State Assembly, 1808-'09; a Representative in Congress, 1815-'17; a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1821; and a Presidential Elector in 1824. He died in Livingston Co., N. Y., July 7, 1857.

the same mail that brought the Memorial of the Canal Commissioners, and its reference to a Committee of Congress, of which I am happy to observe my friend is a member, and to whose politeness I am indebted for this favor.

I think with you Sir that there are few objects of more importance claiming the attention of the national Legislature than those of internal improvements, and I am clearly of opinion that among those which are now progressing to maturity there is not one that the United States could have so deep an interest in acquiring a reciprocal jurisdiction over as that of the intended Canal uniting the navigable waters of the Hudson with those inland seas the great lakes.

There are many objects of local internal improvements that the National Legislature might appropriate a portion of lands requisite for their accomplishment &c over which it would be unnecessary for that Government to acquire a reciprocal jurisdiction, or to participate in their police. This intended canal however is not one of that description, & therefore it will on a little reflection be seen that it is of the greatest importance that they should take a larger interest in its accomplishment in order to acquire an equal participation with the State of the benefits to be derived from it.

It will readily be seen on viewing the maps of North America that whenever this Canal is completed it will be the key to the commerce of a vast portion of the territory of the United States, as well as the British dominions; and if the State shall accomplish the navigation unaided by the national Legislature the State will unquestionably retain the jurisdiction, police, and supreme control over it, and may exercise that control in such manner as to be extremely injurious to the U. S. territories, and exclusively beneficial to the State.

Believing as I sincerely do that this Canal is among the most important that the nation can engage in, and one that will contribute more to the benefit of millions of people, who will inhabit the western regions of the U. States, if participated in and aided by the national Legislature than any other that can be undertaken and accomplished with so

small an expence compared with the immense importance of the object. I am persuaded the General Government will not pass by the opportunity that now presents to participate in this obviously unrivalled (when completed) national accommodation, more especially when we take into view the interest the nation has in its completion is much greater than any interest the State can have.

A participation by the United States will also at all times prevent the State Administration (let it fall in what hands it may, and should be ever so viciously inclined by having the sole control of such a navigable communication) from aggrandizing the State upon the labour of others residing out of our State limits which may be the case if the State is left to prosecute the object without being aided by the general Government.

Having for these several years been fully persuaded of the facility with which a navigable canal could be formed from the Hudson to the Lakes, if undertaken and prosecuted by practical men, I am now since having the direction of an engineer in the prosecution of this business more and more convinced of the great facility with which the canal may be accomplished than heretofore, provided however that all frustraneous projects are discarded in which the prolific brains of visionary theorists often abound, and too frequently defeat objects of the greater utility.

You well know that I am not among those who advocated the effecting this navigation by means of an inclined plane by the formation of an aqueduct to extend from Lake Erie to the Hudson, the lake to be the source and supply of this navigable aqueduct pouring its waters into the Hudson. The parent of this project was the late Gouverneur Morris, & assuredly a more visionary notion never entered the brains of any rational being; and so far from producing a conviction upon the minds of practical men of the facility of effecting a navigation between the Hudson and the lakes it had a contrary and injurious effect, and I have not the least hesitation in giving it as my sincere opinion that the whole line of canal from the Hudson to Lake Erie may be

accomplished, if prosecuted by practical men for a sum much less than that estimated.

Independent of the claims this national improvement has on the munificence of the national Legislature there are doubtless many others of greater importance that deserve a portion of their munificence, and as you have justly observed, "The experience of the late war and the effects of the present peace teaches us many truths and points to national objects worthy the attention of the wisest and best of statesmen." I have no doubt, and indeed I am fully impressed with the opinion that the present Congress will lay the foundation on which an edifice will be erected commensurate with the lasting and permanent benefits of the American people.

Meantime with great respect

I am your most obed't Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

FEDERAL AID URGED AT LENGTH—TO REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE.

[BATAVIA, Jan. 3, 1817.]

Honorable A. S. CLARKE, Esquire,
Washington City.

DEAR SIR: I with great pleasure acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th ult. which duly came to hand the 28th following. Mr. Brooks has also done me the pleasure of a communication on the same subject, to whom I have in a cursory manner thrown together my ideas of the importance of an appropriation of the description you mention as well as the great interest I think the United States have in participating in making the canal from the Hudson to the Lakes.

Should Congress make an appropriation for the purpose of aiding internal improvements, I am sincerely of Opinion that it will stand foremost among the many important and beneficial measures that have been carried into effect by the U. S. Legislature, provided that it can be appropriated ac-

according to the several and respective Advantages to be derived by the accomplishment of the respective internal improvements, for which appropriations from that fund may be required. This it is my opinion might be effected not however by making the actual appropriation for each specific object a part of the act. The distribution of that fund according to my impression will have to be done either by persons to be appointed for that purpose, or left with some of the officers of government.

Was this business left with prudent, practical men to controul they would judge of the practicability of carrying into successful completion all projects of internal improvements if to be performed upon the principles and scale of the projectors; and altho there are many extremely useful projects that would be well deserving the public patronage and to share in the munificence of the appropriation, yet the manner that might be devised for accomplishing them of such a description as would render their completion impracticable; consequently in such cases it would be improper to appropriate for such projects any part of the internal improvement fund. I will state a case of the description I have alluded to, which according to the manner proposed for carrying the project into effect was entirely impracticable, altho nothing easier accomplished, if projected in that practicable manner practical men would devise for the purpose. For instance suppose application should be made for a portion of the 2,000,000 of dollars proposed to be appropriated for the annual internal improvement fund for effecting a canal communication between the Hudson and Lake Erie upon the principles of the one recommended by the late Gouverneur Morris and other commissioners appointed by the state (James Geddis late member of Congress principal Engineer). That is to say, a navigable aqueduct with out locks formed in the manner of an inclined plane; the supply Lake Erie, the water of which moving along it by a slow and gentle current until it forms a junction with the Hudson. I think it would not require much sagacity or practical knowledge to discover that the public money should never be appropriated and expended on such a pro-

ject, inasmuch as the wealth of the nation would be incompetent to the performance of the navigation after the manner of that inclined aqueduct. Hence I infer that when application is made for a portion of the internal improvement fund, the application should be accompanied with a Description of the manner it was proposed to accomplish it, in order that the persons having the superintendence of appropriating that fund should have the necessary information to enable them to judge whether the project could be accomplished upon the plan devised by the projectors, and at an expense which the utility of the object when accomplished would counterbalance, because it is a fact which experience too often proves that things may cost more than they are worth when obtained. As however to the practicability of accomplishing a canal navigation with locks the usual manner of forming canals from the Hudson to Lake Erie, I am persuaded there is no one object that would contribute such important benefits to the nation that could be accomplished with so much facility, provided however that all visionary projects should be discarded, and the object should be prosecuted by practical men in a practicable way, and probably for less than two thirds the sum estimated in the late Memorial from the Commissioners to Congress. That portion of the canal route, which was placed under my Direction to cause to be explored and leveled, and which will be about 60 miles of Canal may be accomplished I am fully of the opinion for less than \$400,000. The estimate I have made from an actual profile taken of the surface of the country where the site of the Canal would trace, which affords the means of estimating the number of cords of earth &c. to be removed, which with the expense of constructing locks (on Gallatins estimate of \$10,000 per lock) amounts in the whole to \$385,518; but to make up for all Deficiencies I have stated \$400,000 which will average \$6666 per mile for the part of the Canal under my superintendence, and which I shall in a few days report to the Commissioners.

It may be proper to observe that my estimate is on the supposition that the money should be expended with the same prudence and discretion as it would be done by an in-

dividual in the performance of his own private work. It might be made to cost two, three or four times that sum, if the money should be prodigally applied, or if the canal should be laid off by some visionary theorist. The remaining part of the route which has not been explored under my direction I know nothing of except from report, which however is generally said to be equally practicable; but as doubtless a canal passing over such a great extent of country must meet with some serious obstacles, let us suppose that each mile of the residue should cost treble my Estimate the whole would amount to the sum of \$6,399,999, or say \$6,500,000; a much larger sum, I am persuaded, could not be expended, provided visionary projects should be discarded relative to laying off the canal site, and that the funds should be managed solely with a view to the completion of the canal, and not with that by the persons having the charge of it for aggrandizing and enriching themselves with the management of the funds. I believe, however, it would not be difficult in forming a bill, to guard against maladministration; nor neither would it be difficult for the persons, who might be entrusted to make the apportionment to judge with tolerable exactitude which objects of internal improvement were intitled to a portion of the Internal Improvement fund. In all cases where application was made for a portion of this fund, the application should be accompanied with a full description of the object with all the obstacles that might have to be encountered.

If the project was a canal let a view of the whole extent of the surface over which the site of the Canal would pass be exhibited by profile topographical maps and plans, accompanied by the field notes in making the levels, stating the composition of earths to be excavated, tunnels to be made, aquaduct bridges to be erected, embankments to be formed, and extent of deep cuttings to be encountered, with all other such information as would be necessary to a correct understanding of the object. Those particulars would form a data, which would enable the persons entrusted with the internal improvement fund to deliberate upon the subject;—While book after book may be written composed in the most

elegant stile and forcible expressions, which may merely contain the imagination of the author, and form no actual data, from which an appropriation could be made. If the project was a road let the survey line be laid down topographically with field notes stating the ascents and descents of hills, mountains, the quantity of excavations necessary to be made, the composition of earth, over which the road would pass, distance material would have to be brought, bridges to be erected, &c, &c, all of which information when laid before the Distributors of the internal improvement fund, would enable them to judge whether the object was intitled to participate in that fund.

I will observe that in the accomplishment of all important improvements, when the United States would participate equally with the State, they would necessarily appoint their own agents to superintend and reserve to themselves a jurisdiction over such improvements in proportion to the sum of money which was respectively expended in their completion; all advances made by the Distributors of the improvement fund to be accounted for, stating what object of improvement had been performed with it.

To form an act for this fund I think will have to be lengthy to embrace all the various objects if done minutely; but I do not by any means see much difficulty in Drafting a Bill to contain every necessary provision that will guard against all maladministration in the distribution and management of this fund.

If the proposed Canal Communication between the Hudson and Lake Erie should be so laid that the Agents of the Holland Company shall be convinced of the practicability of its accomplishment in the manner it may be projected I am persuaded that the Holland Company will subscribe lands in Lots adjoining the Canal to the quantity of at least 8,000 acres, exclusive of donating the site for the Canal, so far as it may pass through the unalienated part of their territory. Such subscription however would be made provisionary; bona fide if the Canal should be completed in 26 years; and if not accomplished in that period the land to revert to the Company. It is very evident to me that should the Canal be

completed at any period before the expiration of the time limited, those lands lying adjoining it might be disposed of for at least \$50 per acre, amounting to \$400,000—a sum that would be sufficient to refund the first expense incurred in excavating that part of the Canal, which has been explored, & leveled the past Season under my direction, extending from Buffalo creek to the East Transit Line of Holland Company Lands Township No. 13 Range 1.

Should the United States, who are an hundred nay a thousand fold more interested than any foreign Land Company can be, make an actual appropriation in money, which might at once be called in requisition for the prosecution of the object of only ten times the sum I have estimated the Holland Company Subscription would amount to on the Canal being completed which for the United States would be \$4,000,000 and the State of New York \$2,000,000, making in the whole \$6,400,000, there can be no question but that the whole line of Canal could be accomplished & boats freighted with the choicest fruits of the earth navigating it in less than 5 years from this period; always providing however that all visionary projects should be discarded, & the object carried into effect upon those principles that the experience of ages has tested to be the most practicable & useful, which is by following the face of the country by means of locks where sufficient water can be had for a supply & not embarking in those visionary inclined plane canal projects where mountains taking place of vallies have to be formed, along which to carry the aqueducts & tunnels made under mountains in the room of plains.

I agree with you perfectly in your ideas upon the subject of the national university. Your reasonings are conclusive to my mind. It is a visionary notion so far as it has a relation to the education of youth, infusing into them more knowledge than they are taught at other seminaries. It is however not visionary so far as it would be the means for the erection of some elegant buildings to beautify the city of Washington & also assist in circulating the money of the nation in that local spot & I presume that to be the most important part that would be accomplished by it.

I enclose herewith an advertisement, which I fear is fraught with much mischief; many persons it is said in this quarter are interesting themselves in making purchases of the lands advertised, & some preparing to embark in the course of the ensuing season with their families to take possession. Would it not be proper for government to examine into this business.

The season thus far has been remarkably mild. We have not any snow worth mentioning.

Pray let me hear from you occasionally regarding such objects as we are locally and nationally interested in.

I shall now close this desultory communication, which I have not had time to revise and correct before handing to the Copyist.

By wishing you a prosperous and happy new year, and assuring you of the sentiments of regard and esteem, with which I have the honor to be very respectfully
your obedient Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

BATAVIA, Jany 3, 1817.

CLINTON TO BUSTI, ON LAND DONATION.

NEW-YORK, 4th January, 1817.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esq.*,

Agent of the Holland Land Company.

SIR: I am charged by the commissioners of canals, to solicit your attention to the donations of lands heretofore promised by the Holland Land Company, but which was not consummated, on account of the late war, which rendered it almost impracticable for the State to embark in an undertaking of such magnitude and expense, at that time.

The commissioners are anxious to know, with all convenient speed, whether you will renew the grant, and add to it the lands through which the canal will pass, and which may be necessary for the operation, on condition that the canal shall be completed within twenty years. The lands of course will not be taxed.

Your prompt answer will oblige the board of commissioners, who are required by law to make a report to the legislature, on the subject of the canal, some time in the beginning of February; and I have only to add, that the whole route has been surveyed, that the practicability and comparative cheapness of the canal, has been satisfactorily ascertained, and that a liberal spirit manifested by the great landed proprietors, on this occasion, may have a benign effect, in promoting this great object.

Very respectfully, I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

DE WITT CLINTON,

President of the Board of Canal Commissioners.

MR. BUSTI STILL DEFERS A DEFINITE PROPOSITION.

PHILADELPHIA, January 9th, 1817.

DE WITT CLINTON, *Esq.*,

President of the board of Canal Commissioners, &c., &c.

SIR: I have had the honor of receiving your letter of the 4th instant, on the subject of the renewal of the donation of lands, heretofore made, by the Holland Land Company, for promoting the execution of canal navigation, from Lake Erie to the Hudson river, but which, in consequence of a postponement of this great undertaking, has reverted to the company.

I am not prepared to give a definite reply to your inquiry. I must content myself, for the present, to assure you, that the disposition of the Holland Land Company, to aid so important a work, remains unaltered. The only question has been, the best manner in which they can give effect to their wish of contributing towards effecting it. With this view, I have some time since consulted Jos. Ellicott, *Esq.* (the company's agent at Batavia,) on this subject, and flatter myself with having it in my power, shortly, to offer to the board of canal commissioners, the Holland Land Company's donation, in lands, on such terms as, I trust, will be per-

fectly satisfactory to the gentleman commissioners, and furnish a further proof of the sincere disposition of my constituents, to aid undertakings of public utility.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, Sir,

Your most obed't servant,

PAUL BUSTI.

MYRON HOLLEY TO JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

CANANDAIGUA 11th Jany 1817.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: I did hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at Batavia before I left home for Albany, but various circumstances have hitherto prevented me, and it is now too late, for it is my intention to start for the Capitol on Monday. When the Commrs were together in November last, they appointed a meeting to be held at Albany the thirteenth of this month and made it the duty of Mr. Young to inform yourself and Gen Van Rensselaer of the appointment; and also, to request the Engineers respectively, to have their returns completed and ready for delivery there, by that day. I mention these facts fearing Mr. Young's letter to you may have miscarried. The Commrs are very desirous, Sir, that you should be present at that meeting, believing that every fair exertion of intelligence and influence will be necessary to the success of the enterprise, which we have all so much at heart, and wishing to avail themselves of your assistance to make out their report.

It will give you great satisfaction, I trust, to learn, that we have had a most respectable county meeting here, this week on the subject of the Canal, the result of which, in the first instance, has been to give new activity and zeal to all the friends of that measure in this vicinity. I wish you could have attended the meeting. The proceedings adopted are contained in the enclosed hand-bill. Is it not expedient to call such a meeting, in your county? If you think it is,

Sir, and every body here thinks so, will you take measures to bring it about?

With great respect, Sir, I am your very obedient

MYRON HOLLEY.

VIEWS OF MICAH BROOKS IN 1817.

WASHINGTON CITY 16th Jany, 1817.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: With much pleasure I rec'd your letter of the 30th Dec. last on the subject of Internal Improvements. I perfectly agree with you respecting the Importance of the Erie Canal and also that the Genl Govt most certainly ought to coöperate with the State govt in effecting the object.

It is all important in a Commercial point of view. The immense wealth of the right bank of the St. Lawrence flows down its waters to Montreal & Quebeck and enables Great Britain in her own bottoms to supply herself and her West India Colonies with provisions, to the exclusion of American bottoms, which is a National loss, and falls with considerable wait upon the Commercial Interest of N. England. I find no difficulty in producing a conviction on the minds of the Members that I converse with of the importance of effecting this object. As you justly observe, "the visionary project of an inclined plain" has had a tendency to produce doubts of the practicability of the Erie Canal. In conversation with Mr. Calhoun he very readily acknowledged the Importance of the Erie Canal, but was not satisfied of its practicability he was anxious we should make a correct survey of the route and if he could be convinced that it could be effected by any reasonable sum he would give it all the support in his power.

At the first meeting of the Committee on Roads & Canals the sum of two millions annually for ten years, was mentioned as a sum necessary to effect all the great National objects, and a majority of the Committee would have been willing to have made this appropriation—but in the detail of this business there are many difficulties to overcome. The

Committee are not in possession of accurate surveys and proper estimates of expense of the different objects that would compose the general system—and to attempt to get an appropriation for one object alone would in all probability fail. In a general appropriation for objects of this kind local attachments and jealousy will spring up and make it difficult to get a speceffick appropriation for each object in the first place. For this reason the Committee will probably report in favor of appointing an able engineer to take the surveys and make estimates of those Routes of primary importance leaving the 2nd part of their report until the sense of the House is taken upon Mr. Calhouns bill. Which goes to appropriate the Bonus and procedes of the National Bank for Internal Improvements. If this bill passes, the Committee will undoubtedly at this session report a bill in favour applying the Funds and to commence the business as soon as possible.

I was much gratified with a description of a part of the Route which you gave in a letter to Judge Clark. I hope we shall get surveys of the whole Route which will be equally favourable—and if we should not be able to get an appropriation or pledge at this session of Congress the subject is ripening for the next.

I will shortly send you some documents on this subject.

Pardon the inaccuracy of these hasty remarks, I have not time to copy or correct.

Very Respectfully Your obt Serv't

MICAH BROOKS.

JOSH. ELLICOTT *Esquire*

ELLICOTT TO CLINTON.

BATAVIA, Jan. 20, 1817.

Honorable DE WITT CLINTON, Esquire,

President of the Board of Canal Commissioners.

DEAR SIR: I forwarded by Mr. Caldwell my report of the canal route from the head waters of Black creek to Lake Erie. I should have been extremely happy in the oppor-

tunity of being the bearer of it, and presenting it to the Board in person; but this preparing and arranging the work performed in the woods to enable me to make report having occupied the principal part of my time since the return of the engineer from the woods has in its consequences so much interfered with my indispensable duties that at the present time I am prevented from the pleasure of visiting Albany and I trust the information is detailed with sufficient perspicuity to render a personal attendance for the purpose of explaining the objects performed as unnecessary.

I forwarded with the report an account of monies I have advanced for defraying expences in prosecuting the work, which you will please have refunded by placing the amount to wit \$1563-42/100 to my credit in any bank in the city of Albany, and advise me thereof.

Your compliance will lay under obligation

with great respect & esteem

Your most obed't humble Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

GOV. CLINTON SEEKS INFORMATION.

ALBANY, 21 Jany, 1817.

DEAR SIR: The Canal Commissioners are anxious to see you here as soon as possible. We want all the benefits of your counsel experience and extensive knowledge of the Country.

Mr. Busti informs me that he has written to you on the subject of a donation from the H. L. Company.

The house in which I lodge is a very good one (Mr. Gourlay's, Washington Street) and I think you can be well accommodated here.

I am Yours with most sincere regard

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

My compliments to Mr. Representative, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Evans.

BUSTI STILL THINKS THE CANAL WILL NEVER BE FINISHED.

PHILADELPHIA 23d January, 1817.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, Esq.,
Batavia.

DEAR SIR: . . . As for the donation to be offered, I have been in expectation of your suggestions in conformity of those your intimate acquaintance with the subject and the views and prospects of the Commissioners will dictate. By a letter of De Witt Clinton Esq I have been asked to state what assistance the H. L. C. would lend to the great undertaking. By some hints thrown out it would seem the Board expects that besides the former grant I will add another of the ground trough which the canal is to be dug and the towpath to be made. With a brieve answer I informed Mr. De Wit Clinton that I was not prepared to make any positive donation before I had your thoughts on a business the decision of which mostly depends from the cognizance of localities to which I am a total stranger. That however the Board could depend on the H. L. C.'s willingness to contribute liberally to the undertaking of the grand work.

Grand indeed and magnificent I consider it to be. So much so that notwithstanding the palatable arguments and calculations given by the writer of the pamphlet entitled *Serious Appeal to the Legislature* I cannot divest myself of my old opinion that if ever begun it will in no age be completed. This consideration naturally makes me lean over to the disposition of renewing rather the grant of the tract on the southern line than to that of curtailing that gratuity and substitute the donation of the ground for the Canal & path. My objection against the last is strengthened by the injury done to farms country seats & lots occasioned by the failure of the Canal that was to unite the waters of the Schuylkill with those of the Delaware. I am very much afraid that in case the work was begun and not completed in your quarters its imperfection would greatly depreciate every farm lot cut up by the dry canal. I say by way of discouraging only, for I am sensible of the many reasons that might be adduced to reverse my alleged opinion. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE TO JOS. ELLICOTT.

CITY WASHINGTON Jan 24, 1817.

D SIR: I recd your letter giving me interesting detail of your views on the subject of internal improvements, which I have shown to several of the members of the committee on that subject, who appeared to feel the force of them. This committee I understand will in a few days complete a report which will recommend an annual appropriation, and a system by which the appropriations shall be applied, but I have not sufficient information what it will be to give you any correct idea of it, therefore shall not attempt it, but wait untill the report is made and will immediately forward it to you. . . .

A. S. CLARKE.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

ELLICOTT TO BUSTI: REPORT ON THE CANAL ROUTE.

BATAVIA Jan 31, 1817.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia

MY DEAR SIR: As considerable more time has elapsed since I had the honor to make a communication to you than ought to have elapsed, or indeed would have done had not the making out a Report of the canal route for the commissioners in Albany occupied so much of my attention, and wishing also in the communication I might next make to be able to inform you of the practicability of excavating a canal on the route so explored are among the causes for this delay.

In my letter of the 15th Octo. ult. I mentioned forwarding to you a map of the route with the profile of the face of the country levelled over. I find however to make out a profile such as to be of any use must be on such a large scale that it would occupy several quires of paper and take more time in its accomplishment than I have to spare. I must therefore content myself by enclosing to you a Dia-

gram or topographical map of the route I have caused to be surveyed levelled and explored, with a statement of the expence I have estimated and reported to the Commissioners to be sufficient to form the Canal, and also the quantity of water which is to be for the supply of the summit level between the Niagara and Genesee River, which I presume will afford sufficient information to enable you to determine on the manner and quantity of land you will be disposed to subscribe on the Company's Account. The following is an extract from that part of my Report to the Commissioners on this subject which relates to the estimate of expence which may be required to construct the canal &c.

[The extract from the report is here omitted, as the report in full follows.]

And here I beg leave to observe that there are few objects of internal Improvement that requires to be more immediately accomplished than the two sections of Canal round the rapids at the head of Niagara River, connected with a safe harbor which requires to be constructed at the East end of Lake Erie; an object necessary for the safety of vessels navigating the Lakes, being the great mart where most of the vessels receive and discharge their lading. Without undertaking to locate any particular site as the most proper for a harbor to be formed I may be permitted to say that it is the opinion of many well informed men that Buffalo Creek which inside of the bar is from 15 to 20 feet in depth might at a small expence compared with the great importance of the object be made a safe and commodious harbor for vessels of every Description that navigate the Lakes. Those objects alone if effected I have not any hesitation in saying would reduce the price of freightage through the Lakes at least 100 pr. cent.

An harbor for vessels at the east end of Lake Erie is all important on account of the great and continued losses sustained by vessels having so frequently to descend the rapids at the outlet for security against the violent storms of wind (which appears peculiar to Lake Erie) oftentimes remaining weeks below waiting a fair wind of sufficient strength

to enable vessels to reascend. It is the opinion of many captains of vessels, who sail on those Lakes, that by extending a pier a few hundred feet from the Southern cape of Buffalo creek in the Direction of that represented on the map designated by the letter P would prevent the southwest wind from driving the sand (which accumulates southerly of the creeks junction with the Lake) into the mouth of the creek and thereby by the means of keeping the channel open for vessels to sail at all times in the creek's mouth. The expence of constructing such a pier it is the opinion of many would not exceed from twenty to thirty thousand Dollars, which is a much less sum than the losses which have been sustained by wreckage occasioned solely from the circumstance of there being no harbor for vessels at the east end of Lake Erie. The commissioners will pardon the liberty I have taken by calling their attention to this subject, being of the opinion that it is so intimately and inseparably connected with the Canal that I have deemed it proper to make mention of it in my Report. Because should there be no safe harbor for vessels navigating the Lake where the canal connects with it the benefit to be derived by the Canal will be comparatively small, & believing also that a harbor at the East end of Lake Erie is among the first and most important objects of internal Improvement requiring to be accomplished in the western part of the State must be my apology for this Digression (if it is a Digression from the canal subject). . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT'S REPORT ON A CANAL ROUTE IN WESTERN
NEW YORK, 1817.

[BATAVIA, Jan., 1817.]

Honorable DE WITT CLINTON, Esquire

President of the Board of Canal Commissioners

DEAR SIR: At a meeting of a Board of Canal Commissioners convened in the village of Buffalo in July last it was among other things ordered by said Board that I should

employ an Engineer & Surveyor for making levels and surveys of the country from a monument fixed by James Geddes Esquire in the Eastern Transit line of the Holland Companys land Westward to Buffalo Creek near Lake Erie for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of excavating a Canal through the intervening country.

In obedience I employed William Peacock & Andrew A. Ellicott Esquires, the former Engineer, and the latter surveyor, to perform that service, and now do myself the honor to make

REPORT.¹

To perform this object with that perspicuity which will enable the Board of Commissioners to form a correct opinion of the practicability or otherwise of the route for a canal I have found it expedient to direct the Engineer from his field notes to make out maps of the profile of the face of the country over which the levels were extended, and also a topographical map exhibiting a view of the projected route, which maps I shall occasionally have to refer to explanatory of the objects performed, and

Firstly, it was deemed necessary to extend a level from Geddis's Monument, which I have designated on the Maps by the Initial A Eastward to the waters of Black creek that fall into the Genesee River, which level line would pass over the greatest elevation between Lake Erie and the Genesee River, and furnish the necessary information to ascertain the exact summit level Elevation above Lake Erie, which object was accordingly performed, and the level line extended & Williams & Smiths Grist mill worked by a stream of water called Spring creek, a Branch of Black Creek aforesaid to the Eastward of the Eastern Extent of the summit level designated on the profile map by the Initial B. Reference being had to the field notes taken in making said section of the level from Station No. 1 a Folio 1 to Station

1. The maps which accompanied this report were presumably filed at Albany. No duplicates which tally with the references in the Report, are among the Holland Land Co. maps in the possession of the Buffalo Historical Society.

226 inclusive Folio 2 will exhibit The courses and Distances of the several levels, and also the elevations and depressions of the country leveled over, with such remarks as the Engineer deemed expedient to make. And the Atlas Maps Pages 1 & 2 will exhibit the profile of the face of the country leveled over.

The preceding level being accomplished a level line was commenced at the aforesaid Monument designated on the Maps A and extended Westward along the South Margin of Tonnawonta Swamp with the impression that the surface of Swamp would be found nearly horizontal; but on the Engineer arriving at the Oak Orchard Road it was ascertained that the face of the Swamp had a considerable descent to the west, and had dipped 12 feet below Geddis's Monument, which we shall call the *Transit line level*.

From the Oak Orchard Road the Engineer was directed to explore the ground and extend his level line on the same horizontal elevation of the Transit line level as near as he could find the surface of the country to conform with it, without regard to meanders until his level line would meet the surface of water in Tonnawonta Creek, which when accomplished a Judgment might be formed of the most proper place to terminate the western extent of the upper or summit level canal, and where the first descending locks might most advantageously commence. On the Engineer's arriving with his level line aforesaid at the Tonnawonta Creek designated on the profile & topographical Maps by the Initial D it was our opinion that the most proper place to commence the descending locks would be at the point designated on the Maps by the Initial C near the Lewiston Road, inasmuch as the Residue of the level from C to D is in a direction that would unnecessarily increase the Distance of the actual Canal and therefore the portion of Level between the Initials C and D might more properly constitute the site for the feeder to introduce the water from Tonnawonta creek into the Summit level. Reference being had to the field notes taken by the Engineer in making his level Westward from Station No. 1 a Folio 4 to station No. 204 a Inclusive Folio 16 and also to the Atlas Maps exhibit-

ing the profile of the face of the country over which the level was made from the point designated A to the point designated C, comprehended in pages No. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10 & 11 will enable the commissioners to form a tolerable accurate opinion of the feasibility of excavating the canal along the summit level. And the field Notes from station No. 204 C Folio 16 to Station No. 231 d inclusive folio 17, and from Station No. 1 e Folio 18 to Station No. 27 f Folio 19 inclusive will be seen the observations and remarks made by the Engineer in accomplishing the level of the feeder, and the Atlas Maps from the Initial C to the Initial D Pages No. 22, 23 & 24 will exhibit the profile of the face of country leveled over.

By the period the Engineer had accomplished the level for the summit canal the season was so far advanced that it became impracticable to mark off precisely the ground on which the summit level canal aforesaid could be most judiciously laid & perform the level to ascertain how many feet the summit level was more elevated than Lake Erie, and believing the level line which the Engineer had run and marked afforded sufficient information for all present purposes I directed him to extend his level from the point C near the Lewiston Road to the Commencement of Still-water on the Tonawonta Creek 12 miles above its Junction with the Niagara River; and on the performance of that object to proceed to the Mouth of Tonawonta Creek and extend a level line from the southern cape Buffalo Creek near Lake Erie. Those levels being accomplished we should ascertain not only the actual elevation of the summit level above still water in the Tonawonta Creek, but also above the surface of the water in Buffalo Creek on a level with Lake Erie, as well as obtain information of the undulations in the surface of the intervening country.

In the meantime the Engineer was instructed to guage with all possible accuracy the number of cubic feet of water passing down the Tonawonta creek pr. minute, having previously been instructed to guage and ascertain the quantum of water discharged by the several Brooks, which he might meet with intersecting his canal Route on producing

his level, and that might be conducted in the summit level canal. Reference being had to a minute statement of his guagings following his field notes will afford all the information on that subject.

The guagings of Tonnawonta Creek (which was deemed very important) being accomplished the Engineer commenced a level line from the Point C near the Lewiston Road aforesaid, and extended it down Tonnawonta Creek to the Commencement of stillwater. It is proper for me to observe that this level line was mostly extended along the creek, side road, and not made with the view of designating the actual site for the canal, but for the purpose of ascertaining (as I have before stated) the elevation of the summit level above still water in Tonnawonta Creek; consequently the profile map of said level exhibits the surface of the tract of country passed over to be more uneven than it would have exhibited had the Engineer been laying off the actual site for the canal to be excavated. Reference being had to the field notes taken by the Engineer from Station No. 1 g Folio 20 to Station No. 160 h Folio 27 inclusive, and also to the Atlas Maps, Pages 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21, exhibiting the profile of the face of the country over which the said level was extended will evince that few Tracts of country of the same extent has a more even surface than the profile laid down from the actual field notes exhibits, which extend from the Initial C as designated on the maps to the commencement of still water of Tonnawonta Creek.

The whole elevation of the summit level above still water in Tonnawonta creek the Engineer has ascertained to be 79 48½/100 feet.

From the Junction of Tonnawonta Creek with the Niagara River to Black rock ferry designated by the Initial E the level extended along the River side Road. Reference being had to the field notes from Station No. 1 i Folio 28 to No. 48 K Folio 30 inclusive will be seen the remarks & observations made by the Engineer in making this sectional level; and by referring to the Atlas Maps pages 25, 26, 27, 28 & 29 will be seen the profile of the face of the country

over which the level was extended to the ferry at Black rock. From thence the Engineer commenced his level at the bend of Little Buffalo Creek, designated on the maps by the initial F and extended it through the Buffalo marsh to the southern termination of Black Rock designated G. Reference being had to the field notes from Station No. 1 e Folio 31 to station No. 10 m will be seen the observations and remarks made by the Engineer in the performance of this part of his level; and also to the Atlass Maps from the Initial F to G aforesaid, Pages [blank] will show the profile of the face of the marsh and its elevation above Lake Erie, and consequently the Depth necessary to be excavated for the formation of that part of the Canal.

From the point G designated on the maps the level was extended to the point E at Black rock ferry aforesaid reference being had to the field notes from Station No. 10 m Folio 31 to Station No. 13 n inclusive will be seen the remarks of the Engineer and to the Atlas Maps from G to E aforesaid Pages [blank] will exhibit the profile of the surface over which the level was carried. And here I beg leave to observe that there are few objects of internal improvement that require to be more immediately accomplished than this section of the canal round the rapids at the head of Niagara River connected with a safe harbour which requires to be constructed at the Eastern end of Lake Erie; an object necessary for the safety of vessels navigating the upper lakes, being the great mart where all vessels receive and discharge their lading. Without undertaking to locate any particular site as the most proper for a harbour to be formed, I may be permitted to say that it is the opinion of many well informed men that Buffalo Creek (which inside of the bar is from 15 to 20 feet in depth) might at a small expence compared with the great importance of the object be made a safe and commodious harbour for vessels of every description that navigate the lakes. Those objects alone if effected I have no hesitation in saying would reduce the price of freightage through the lakes at least 100 pr. cent. A harbour at the east end of the lake is all important, on account of the great and continual losses sustained by

the vessels having so frequently to descend the rapids at the outlet for security againts the violent storms of wind (which appear peculiar to Lake Erie) oftentimes remaining weeks below waiting a fair wind of sufficient strength to enable vessels to reascend.

It is the opinion of many Captains of vessels who sail on those lakes that by extending a pier a few hundred feet from the southern cape of Buffalo creek in the direction of that represented on the maps designated by the letter p would prevent the southwest wind from driving the sand (which accumulates southerly of the creek's junction with the Lake) into the mouth of the creek, and thereby be the means of keeping the channel open for vessels to sail at all times in the creek's mouth. The expence of constructing such a pier it is the opinion of many would not exceed from twenty to thirty thousand Dollars, which is a much less sum than the losses which have been sustained by wreckage occasioned solely from the circumstance of there being no safe harbour for vessels at the East end of Lake Erie.

The commissioners will pardon the liberty I have taken by calling their attention to this subject, being of the opinion that it is so intimately and inseparably connected with the canal, that I have deemed it proper to make mention of it in this Report; because should there be no safe harbour for vessels navigating the Lake where the Canal connects with it the benefits to be derived by the canal will be comparatively small; and believing also that a harbour at the East end of Lake Erie among the first and most important of internal improvements requiring to be accomplished in the western part of the State must be my apology for this digression from the canal subject.

Having in the preceding pages stated to the commissioners with as much perspicacity as my time from indispensable duties will admit the route for the canal that I have caused to be explored, levelled and surveyed, and referred them to the field notes taken by the Engineer in making the levels for more particular information, the next object of inquiry is what will be the probable expence attending the excavation of the canal through the several sections on this route. And

First, of that section of canal from where it would unite with the navigation of Lake Erie at Buffalo Creek designated on the topographical map by the Initial F to the Southern extremity of Black rock designated on the map aforesaid by the initial G being a Distance of two miles of Marsh, formerly producing cranberries; the marsh muck averaging from 2 to 2-1/2 feet in depth; the under part strong clay suitable for bricks. The average elevation of the face of the marsh above the surface of the water in Lake Erie as appears by the profile map exhibiting the shape of the surface of this section of the site for said canal is about 5-1/2 feet; but as the canal would have to be excavated of such a depth as to contain 4-1/2 feet of water, the whole average Depth to be excavated from F to G would be 10 feet.

If it were determined that 40 feet should be the mean breadth of the Canal at the surface of the water, and 26 feet the mean breadth at the bottom of the Canal, which I presume will be of sufficient magnitude, and make the estimate of expence upon that Data there would require in making the excavation of the aforesaid section of canal to be removed to form the aqueduct 33,350 cords of earth, and allowing \$1.12 1/2 to defray the expence of excavating each cord, the aggregate sum for cutting the aforesaid section of Canal would amount to \$375,518.75.

Second—That section of the canal site between the Initials G and E, which I call Black rock Section, composed principally of stratum of calcareous earth, the upper strata incorporated with silex, the whole Distance one mile, the average depth less than 5 feet, but say 5 feet, there would require to be excavated to make this cut 49,960 cubic perches of stone, which if we estimate can be removed for 62 1/2 Cents pr. perch (and there can be no question but that it may be accomplished for a less sum. The expence for making the cut for this section of the canal will amount to \$30,600. If however a wall should be erected for the Bank of the canal next the river and puddled, which probably would answer equally as well as making the cut through the stratum of calcareous earth, the expence would not exceed

\$15000. Rather choosing however to make the Estimate on the highest probable sum I shall consider the former as the Estimate.

Third—That section of the canal site extending from the Initial E at Black rock ferry to the Initial L (topographical map) at Tonnawonta Creek must be formed principally long the margin of the Niagara River. Although a portion of this section will not require other excavation than what will be sufficient to furnish earth for an embankment next the river, nevertheless as there will have some wiers to be made across the mouths of creeks, and some narrows to wall I presume the estimate will average a cut of 5 feet in depth, and the distance being 13 miles will require the Removal of 80600 cords of earth to form the aqueduct which if we estimate the expence of excavating each cord upon an average at \$1 and which I presume would be sufficient, in as much as the labor attending the excavation of a canal 5 feet in Depth is comparatively less than that of 10 feet in depth it will be adequate for the performance of the object, amounting in the whole aggregate to \$80,600.

Fourth—The preceding object accomplished I would propose the constructing a Dam across Tonnawonta Creek of the same elevated height of the water of Lake Erie at Buffalo Creek, thereby raising the water in Tonnawonta of the same elevated height of Lake Erie, which uniting with the canal, the Tonnawonta upwards would form and become a portion of the canal as far as the still or level water set, which would be to the Initial R (Topographical map) a Distance of 17 miles. Consequently the Lake Erie canal level would extend from F at Buffalo creek to a place up Tonnawonta Creek designated as aforesaid by the initial R, constituting one level of 33 miles. Although in most cases the beds of creeks are not considered suitable for canal navigation, this portion of Tonnawonta I consider an exception; the creek being from 14 to 20 perches in breadth, the water in which raised to the Lake Erie level by means of the dam aforesaid with bold shores, and consequently will be but partially effected with freshets; and by constituting this por-

tion of Tonnawonta creek as part of the canal there is saved 17 miles of cutting, and only the expence of a Dam or weir say at the most \$8,500, and towing paths to be encountered, which at \$600 pr. mile, a sum amply sufficient to accomplish the purpose, amounts in the aggregate to \$18,700.

Fifth—I would also propose that a lock should be constructed near the Dam to connect the canal with the Niagara River for the accommodation of boats ascending from Schlosser to Lake Erie and vice versa Expence say \$10,000.

Sixth—That section of the canal site extending from the Initial R, being the Eastern extent of the Lake Erie Level canal to the Initial C, being the western Extent of the summit level canal will require the construction of 10 locks, each with 7-48/100 feet lifts to convey boats from the Lake Erie level to the summit level canal aforesaid. Three of which locks may be constructed at the place designated by the Initial R aforesaid, being the western extent of the summit level and the other three at such place or places as might be found most convenient and suitable in the intervening part of the level. The estimated expence for constructing Locks (vide Gallatins Report) is \$10,000 pr. Lock, making the aggregate expence of the locks to be constructed to convey Boats from the Lake level to the summit level \$100,000. The tract of country over which this section of the Canal may be directed is so remarkable for its evenness of surface that I am persuaded a site for the canal might be so laid that a cut would not be necessary to be made upon an average of more than three feet in depth to form a canal of the magnitude of the one I have proposed to wit 40 feet in breadth, at the surface of water, 4-1/2 feet in depth, and 26 feet in breadth at the bottom of the canal, from which I deduce the following Result of the expence that may attend the excavation of each mile of said section of canal. A cut averaging three feet in depth (which will contribute sufficient earth for the Banks to contain the water) will contain 3786 cubic cords, and I am fully of opinion that a cut of that depth, which could be made almost exclusively with the plough and scraper, would not cost more pr. cord to excavate than 50 cents; but rather wishing to make the estimate

on the greatest probable cost I will estimate it at 62-1/2 cents pr. cord; the distance 12 miles amounts to \$28275, which added to the estimated expence of constructing locks in this section of said canal makes the aggregate expence \$128,275.

Seventh—That section of the canal site extending from the initial C to the initial B, being the summit level canal site between lake Erie and Genesee River, my impressions are that in making this cut the expence will not be greater than that of making a cut of the uniform depth of four feet; as no deep cuttings will be required or embankments of much elevation to be made for the greater portion of the distance there will only require so much earth to be removed as will make the banks of sufficient elevation together with the depth of the cut to contain the water. I presume for the greater part of the distance the depth to be excavated would average less than three feet; but rather choosing to make the estimate upon Data greater than I conceive will be the utmost extent I place the whole average depth to be excavated 4 feet, which can principally be accomplished with the plough and scraper, there being no ledges of rocks or stones in the site where this section of the canal would be laid; consequently such a cut might be performed for less than 75 Cents pr. cord, each mile of which containing 5050 cords would be accomplished for \$3787 50/100, and for the whole extent to the summit level being 57 miles, will amount in the aggregate to the sum of \$64387 50/100.

Eighth—The aqueduct, which will require to be made for conveying the water of Tonawonta Creek into the summit level canal, designated on the Map extending from the initial C to D will be 4-3/4 miles in length, and the expence of its excavation predicted upon a cut of 16 feet in breadth and 4 feet in depth will require the removal of 2640 cords of earth for each mile, which estimated at 75 Cents pr. cord will amount in the aggregate to \$9443.

In making the preceding estimates of the expence that may attend the excavation of the several section sites for the canal, little has been left to conjecture, they are founded on actual levels taken wherein nearly the exact shape of the

face of the country has been ascertained, and exhibited by the profile maps accompanying this Report.

Making the aggregate distance of the whole line of canal site from Buffalo creek at the east end of Lake Erie to the Eastern extent of the summit level at the head waters of Black Creek, a Branch of the Genesee river 62 miles, and the aggregate expence that may attend the excavation of the different sections of the canal erecting locks &c as follows—

Recapitulation Table

First Section	\$ 37,518.75
Second	“	30,600.00
Third	“	80,600.00
Fourth	“	18,700.00
Fifth	“	10,000.00
Sixth	“	128,275.00
Seventh	“	64,387.50
Eighth	“	9,443.00
		<hr/>
Total	\$379,524.25

I will observe that in making the preceding estimates I have made no allowance for grubbing up trees and stumps that may stand within the limits of the canal site, or for the sum that might be required to be expended in conducting the waters of Biglow's & Spring Creeks in the summit level canal, nor for the pay of Engineers and officers superintending the execution of the work. Therefore probably to defray those additional Disbursements the Estimate might be increased to the aggregate integral sum of \$450,000.

The above sum I am persuaded would be sufficient to complete the canal from the Initial F at Buffalo Creek to the Eastern extent of the summit level at the Initial B, provided the fund was managed with all that economy which a prudent discreet person would use in conducting his private concerns; but if the expenditure in the performance of this work should be made profusely without economizing as is too often the case in the accomplishment of public objects double the Amount I have estimated might be insufficient.

The supply of water for the consumption of locks connected with the summit level canal will be abundantly ample, as has been ascertained by the Engineer whose guagings of the several streams, from which I have founded the following estimate, were performed with the greatest exactitude in the dryest Season of the year, and at a time of the most estreme drought known since the first Settlements in this part of the country, which guagings are entered at large as an appendix to his field notes, to which the commissioners are referred.

Estimate

of the number of cubic feet of water which the several respective creeks and brooks, which intersect, and may be brought in the summit level canal affords pr. hour, computed from guagings made by the Engineer at a time of uncommon drought, when they discharged the smallest quantity of water at any period in the season.

Table

	CUBIC FEET PER HOUR
* Branch of Biglow's creek	13284
* Spring Creek	41236-20/100
* Transit line Brook	3139-20/100
* Turner's Brook	2943-60/100
* Sulphur Spring Brook	192
* Blodget's Creek	44100
* Cedar Swamp Brook	2887-80/100
* Trout Brook	4208-40/100
* Holmes Brook	1528-20/100
Tonnawonta Creek Mean	
Quantity for 8 Days	139915-80/100
Total	253435-40/100

Those creeks and Brooks marked thus * are supported by durable springs, Exclusive of those guaged there were several brooks and springs intersected the summit level that were not guaged, which would probably yield sufficient water to supply evaporation and percolation.

The dimensions of the locks of the grand Junction canal in Great Britain are 86 feet in length, 15 feet in breadth &

7 feet lifts, containing 9030 cubic feet of water. Hence the aggregate Quantity of water produced by the several creeks and brooks aforesaid will fill a lock of such dimensions every 2 minutes & 5 seconds during the 24 hours; which would and discharge 336-79/100 locks at each end of the summit level canal every 24 hours; and if we allow two locks of water & discharged at each end of the summit level canal respectively as necessary for the passage of a boat, there is a sufficient supply of water for the passage of 168.39 boats at each end of the summit level daily and allowing each boat to be freighted with 30 tons (although locks of the above dimensions are sufficiently large for 50 Ton boats) the amount of Tonnage that might daily pass through the locks at each end respectively would be 5040 and for the season, admitting the canal should be navigable 8 months to 1,209,600 Tons.

When I take into view that those creeks and brooks were guaged in that season of the year when all the waters were at their lowest depression and also in the time of the most extreme drought, and that the supply of water which they discharged at that period during each 24 hours was sufficient to fill locks at each end of the summit level canal during the 12 hours (which the Canal would be used in the 24) every 2 minutes & 5 seconds; and when I also take into view that the formation of the canal over the summit level on account of the gradual declivity of the country Northward would render it unnecessary to do little more than make an embankment on the north side of the cut, which in its effects would form reservoirs exceeding in their aggregate extent more than 1000 acres thereby affording sufficient water for bavigating the Canal near two months. I am fully persuaded there cannot be a question but that the supply of water for the use of a canal navigation this route is fully commensurate with any extent that may be required.

All which is most respectfully submitted Sir

With great respect & esteem

Your most obed't humble Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT

BATAVIA, January, 1817.

CLINTON TO ELLICOTT.

ALBANY, 11 February, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR: I received by Mr. Caldwell your luminous view of the Southern Route with the accompanying maps &c. They are well executed and the whole communication is very satisfactory. We are now busily employed in preparing the Reports required by law which must be presented before Monday next. As soon as they are printed I shall direct them to be transmitted to you.

I have requested Mr. Holley our Treasurer to attend to the pecuniary request in your letter and he informs me that he will attend to it & write you as soon as he is relieved from the pressure on his time occasioned by the compilation of our Reports.

I am Dr Sir

Respectfully & Sincerely Yours

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

My best compliments to Mr. Representative, Messrs. Graves & Stevens.

Evans MSS.

THE LAND COMPANY SUBSCRIPTION AGAIN.

BATAVIA Feb. 12, 1817.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia,

MY DEAR SIR: . . . On the canal subject I have in my letter of the 31st ult. inserted an extract from my Report to the commissioners, who may have convened in Albany. Not however having specific instructions and directions from you of the manner you would make a subscription I deemed most proper to decline mentioning any.

I had however from the tenor of your letter of the 26th ult. been impressed with the opinion from the view of the subject you then took that the most proper time and way

to make the Donation would be when the canal site should be actually designated and to set apart each alternate Lot that might then belong to the Company watered by the canal. The arguments contained in said letter were at the time so cogent and conclusive with me that I then thought the plan ought not to be abandoned, but the reasons contained in your subsequent letter of the 25th January ult. are more conclusive the other way, and my impressions now are that it would be best to subscribe the southern lands, or such portion of them with granting the canal site and towing paths as would be equal to the former proposed Donation: all which might be provisionally done on the terms of the former donation: that is to say the Lands to be free from any Tax on the Holland Company &c &c Could that Tract of country be placed in a situation whereon no taxes would be charged against it for 26 years & should then fall back to the Company, it might no doubt at that period be sold for a tolerable price and I do not believe that any appropriation of monies will be made by Congress during the present session towards the accomplishment of that object, which belief is founded on a correspondence with members of Congress from this part of the State, who are much in the Canal Interest; extracts from which so far as it relates to the canal subject may not be uninteresting to you, and under that impression I enclose them herewith. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

DONATIONS AND FEDERAL AID.

ALBANY, 14 February, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR: Mr. Busti in a reply to a letter of mine some time ago promised to make to the Canal Commissioners thro' you a proposal for a donation in behalf of the Holland Land Company. As this has not yet been done, and as it may have some influence on the measures to be adopted, I hope you will write to me on this subject.

The bill for appropriating a fund for internal improvements has passed the H of Representatives in Congress by

a majority of *two* after a severe struggle. When the Clerk announced the vote a buz was heard thro' the house "New York has carried it." If it becomes a law it will give us 90,000 dollars a year for the Canal.

I am yours sincerely

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

Evans MSS.

THE COMMISSIONERS' ESTIMATES OF 1817.

ALBANY 18th February 1817.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: I have this morning deposited, in the New York State bank, \$1563.42½ subject to your order, according to your request.

The business of preparing the Commissioners report, on the western canal, occupied me so incessantly after the receipt of your account of expenditures in the examinations made by Mr. Peacock and Mr. A. Ellicott, that I had no time to attend to this request earlier; and I hope the delay of a week has been of no inconvenience to you. Our report was yesterday presented to the Legislature, and five hundred copies were ordered to be printed. It is very long, and when it comes out I will do myself the honor of sending it to you. The aggregate expense of it, when completed, according to our estimates, will be \$4,806,738 taking the route explored by Mr. Geddes west of the Genesee river. If, however, the route south of the mountain ridge be adopted, and there be added to the estimates furnished by you of the expenses of the first 62 miles eastward from Lake Erie on that route, the sum of \$150,000 for lockage down a descent of 139.85 feet from the summit level to the Genesee river, and also the sum of \$180,000 for all the other expenses of making the canal from the east end of Mr. Peacock's line to the Genesee river, then the whole expense of the canal will be \$309925 less than the sum above stated,

this last sum being the difference in our estimate of expenses west of the Genesee river between the route north and the one south of the mountain ridge.

From Lake Erie to Seneca river is a descent of.. 194 feet

From Seneca river to Rome is an ascent of..... 48½ feet

From Rome to the Hudson river at Albany is a descent of 418.85 feet

The whole distance from Buffalo to Albany on the line of the canal is 353 miles and a few chains. The number of locks 77. The average expense about \$13600. per mile.

The average expense per mile from Buffalo to the point whence Geddes started is \$ 7625

The average expense per mile through Geddes section 11404

The average expense per mile through Wright's section 11145

The average expense per mile from Rome to Schoharie Creek 15360

The average expense per mile from Schoharie Creek to Albany 26336

What the Legislature will do, in the business of the canal, it is impossible to foresee. There are undoubtedly in the minds of many members unfavorable impressions, but I flatter myself it is because they do not understand the subject. Having been very much engaged in examining the difficulties and facilities exhibited on the whole route, and in considering and calculating the expenses, my mind is so completely settled and satisfied that I cannot but believe that when our report is read and understood, the Legislature will be disposed to take efficient measures for the accomplishment of this great work.

With great respect I am Sir

your obedient

MYRON HOLLEY

JOSEPH ELLICOTT *Esqr*

MR. BUSTI STILL CONSIDERING.

BATAVIA Feb. 21, 1817.

DE WITT CLINTON, *Esquire,*
Albany.

DEAR SIR: Yours of the 14th was delivered on the evening of the 19th. The Agent General of the Holland Company Mr. Busti has not as yet furnished me with instructions authorizing a specific Donation to the Canal. I transmitted to that Gentleman a copy of my Report to the Canal Commissioners in Albany, with a request that he would make up his mind and inform me or the commissioners what Donation might be expected from the Holland Company, & received by last mail his acknowledgment of its receipt, and among other things he observes.

"I have perused with attention and Interest your luminous report to the Gentlemen Canal Commissioners in relation to that part of the canal, which will pass through the Holland Company's lands."

He observes further: "I shall make up my mind as to the manner and extent of subscription to be made on account of the Canal in a few Days; after which I shall lose no time to make a tender of the Holland Company's Donation towards that stupendous work."

Hence I presume you will be made acquainted with the Amount of subscription in a few days, and I presume it will not differ materially from that formerly made. Of this however I cannot vouch for a certainty.

The mail that brought your letter announcing the \$90,000 appropriated by Congress annually for 20 years towards the canal brought letters from members I have corresponded with on that subject of the same import. Should this appropriation (which however is too small to answer much purpose) be concurred in by the Senate and pass into a law it will be an entering wedge for larger grants, which will doubtless be made provided the site of this Canal when it comes to be actually located shall be so laid as to insure the practicability of its accomplishment at a reasonable expence.

I shall be happy to receive your report to the Legislature when convenient. Meantime

With great respect

Your obed't Servant.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MR. BUSTI STILL "INCREDULOUS" OF CANAL SUCCESS.

PHILA 22d February 1817.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*,
Batavia

DEAR SIR: . . . The long agitated project of the Canal so pompously brought forward will be the theme of discussion & plans for a long while yet. But the more I consider the nature of the undertaking and compare it with the temper of our State & general government the more I grow incredulous of its ever be[ing] perfected if begun. Under this impression I have thought it preferable to renew to the Commissioners the offer of the large tract situated along the pensilvania boundary line under the same conditions as before. Should the boon be accepted I shall only to have to hand over the old deed.

In addition to that donation I have offered the scite of excavation for the Canal and the towpath so far as the soil belongs to the Company. But I have connected this gratuitous grant with the condition that the outlet of Buffalo Creek be converted into a safe place of refuge for the vessels navigating the lake. The usefulness of a harbour there is striking. So much so that I wonder that it has not even been mentioned in the numerous publications edited on the Canal. Probably this omission originated in the wish to avoid stirring the jealousy of the Black Rocks partizans. . .

PAUL BUSTI

THE HOLLAND LAND CO. OFFER OF 1814 RENEWED IN 1817.

PHILADELPHIA, February 22nd, 1817.

DE WITT CLINTON, *Esq.*,

President of the Grand Canal Company, &c., &c.

SIR: Agreeably to the promise conveyed by my respects of the 9th ult. I have now the honour of waiting on you with the Holland Land Company's offer of contributing to the making of a canal navigation from the east end of Lake Erie to the Hudson river.

After mature reflection and consultation with Mr. Ellicott, on the most proper means of giving effect to the Holland Land Company's disposition of aiding a public undertaking of such magnitude, and promising such important advantages to your patriotic State, I have come to the determination of renewing, on the same terms, the offer heretofore made and accepted by the gentlemen commissioners in 1814, but which, in consequence of the late war, was not consummated. I have been led to this selection by the conviction that I shall have the happiness of reconciling the liberal views of my constituents, with the most sanguine expectations of your board. The acceptance in 1814, of this grant, forms the ground of this conviction. I have now the pleasure to repeat my offer of conveying to the State of New-York, two tracts of land situate in the county of Cattaraugus and State of New-York, containing upwards of one hundred thousand acres of land, on condition that the canal shall be completed within twenty years; that the land shall not be taxed during that period, and in case of failure, that it shall revert to the company, or the state remain accountable for any part sold or disposed of. For the particulars of the terms and conditions, on which the grant was heretofore made, and is now renewed, I beg your reference to the enclosed copy of the proposed act to be passed by the legislature, and of the conveyance then executed by the Holland Land Company, but since annulled. In case any lots in the two tracts should have been sold, they must of course be excepted; but I believe no such sale has taken place. As a further proof that the best wishes of my constituents for

the success of this stupendous work, have not been weakened by the lapse of time, since the first offer reverted, I feel myself authorized to add to that grant the ground actually the property of the Holland Land Company, through which the canal shall pass, with sufficient tow-paths along its sides, the breadth of which grant, however, not to exceed four rods. This additional grant I offer on condition that the canal company shall make, within the time limited for the completion of the canal, a good and safe harbour for vessels navigating Lake Erie, at or near the mouth of Buffalo creek. To this condition, I am persuaded no objection will be made. It is so intimately connected with the free and full use of the canal, that it really forms a most important part of it. That a safe and commodious harbour at the east end of Lake Erie, is at present much wanted, and would be an object of vast importance to the trade which passes through that inland sea, by offering security to their vessels, and facilities for the loading and unloading of them, is a truth known to every one acquainted with that part of your State. It appears to me equally evident that the benefits resulting from the canal navigation, must in a good measure depend on its connexion with the navigation both above and below it, and that it necessarily becomes an object of the last importance to afford every possible facility for the transfer of the cargoes of the canal boats to the vessels navigating the waters above and below them. Were I not forgetful of trespassing on your valuable time, much more might be added in support of this measure, but it certainly has not escaped the clearer penetration of the gentlemen commissioners, and I ought to apologize for saying so much on a subject, the utility of which appears so evident.

I am ready to confirm the foregoing, in the same manner as was done in 1814: I will convey the lands and site for the canal, on the conditions above stated, to the people of the State of New-York. The deed to remain as an escrow in the hands of T. L. Ogden, Esq., of New-York, to become absolute on the passage of the proposed act by the legislature, provided it be passed within one year from the date of the deed.

I flatter myself with the hope of having fully met the wishes of your board, and of having afforded them and the State of New-York another unequivocal proof that my constituents feel the liveliest interest in the welfare of your State, and that they are not the last in offering their mite in contributing to its prosperity.

I have the honour to be, with great respect, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

PAUL BUSTI,

Agent of the Holland Land Company.

PRELIMINARY CANAL WORK PRAISED.

BATAVIA April 16, 1817.

DE WITT CLINTON,

DEAR SIR: I with much satisfaction acknowledge the Receipt of your letter of the 8th Instant together with the liminous map you have obligingly forwarded to me, exhibiting topographical and profile view of the Canal Site between Hudson river and Lake Erie. The acting or rather active commissioners have immortalized their names by their unparalleled industry, enterprise & perseverance in effecting so extensive an undertaking as that which they have accomplished, affording so much practical information. Their efforts are without parallel; and I believe [I] might say, and at no risk of Contradiction, that an accurate level line of such length accompanied by copper plate maps and detailed reports exhibiting and elucidating with such perspicuity a whole view of so extensive and great an object and all performed in the short period of 8 months has never before been done in any age or country. Should the present Legislature pass laws calculated for the immediate prosecution of the object it will be more than I have expected, and shall be agreeably disappointed. There was no mention made of the canal, or that the commissioners were attending to the object in his Excellency's speech in opening the session of the Legislature; of course the members were not reminded that this subject would be one which they would be called on to

legislate, and as it was not even intimated in any of the executive messages it is reasonable to apprehend that many members would form an opinion that his Excellency was unfavorably disposed, which would be sufficient to direct the course they were to pursue. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

PASSAGE OF THE CANAL BILL.

ALBANY, 16 April, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR: I cannot leave this place without congratulating you upon the success of the Canal bill. It has become a law by large majorities in both houses and after much opposition. With one exceptionable feature it is a good system and will be very efficacious. You are continued as a commissioner with your former colleagues.

My kind regards to your brother Stevens & Evans & believe me to be

Your sincere friend,

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

Evans MSS.

MR. ELLICOTT'S ATTITUDE AS CANAL COMMISSIONER.

BATAVIA April 25, 1817.

DE WITT CLINTON, *Esquire,*
New York.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 16th announcing the success of the Canal Bill duly came to hand. I am truly agreeably disappointed in this result; in as much as I had formed an opinion for the reasons assigned in my last that the Bill could not be carried through the Legislature in any shape.

In respect to my being continued a commissioner with gentlemen who have accomplished so much and who are so deserving and capable as the acting commissioners have manifested themselves to be for conducting the grand canal

project to a successful issue. I certainly consider it an honor that I had not anticipated, more especially as the little part I had an opportunity of taking in the business rendered me at best little more than a nominal commissioner; a circumstance indeed that would have induced me to have resigned the station had I deemed the presence of another acting commissioner necessary for the better and more able conducting of the object. That however was not my opinion. Under the guidance of those gentlemen, who have prosecuted the object so far with so much success I consider the Canal more than half accomplished. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MONEY STRINGENCY THREATENS CANAL WORK.

NEW YORK 10 May 1817

DEAR SIR: I have appointed the 3d day of June for the meeting of the Canal Commissioners at Utica, where I expect to have the pleasure of seeing you.

I enclose you an advertisement from the Commissioners of the Canal fund. Money is very scarce in this city owing to the Banks liquidating their mutual accounts by the first day of July. If this first and small loan should fail it would have a very pernicious effect on all our future operations and I am not certain but that it would gratify the President of the Canal fund board. Cannot you write to Mr. Busti on this subject and urge his favorable interference?

I am yours truly

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

ATTITUDE OF THE HOLLAND LAND CO.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire*,
Agent General of the Holland Land Company,
Philadelphia.

MY DEAR SIR: . . . The Legislature during their session of 1816 passed an Act to provide for the internal im-

provement of this State, appointing DeWitt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Samuel Young, Myron Holley and myself commissioners to devise and adopt such measures as shall be requisite to facilitate and effect a communication, by canals and locks between Lake Erie and the navigable waters of Hudson River, and also between Lake Champlain & the said navigable waters.

Although the duties devolving on me by my contract with the Agent General would not admit my being an active commissioner, I conceived it might be beneficial to accept the appointment, in as much as thereby I should probably have some influence in giving such a direction to the site of the Canal within the Holland Purchase as appeared to me not only the most advantageous to the public convenience, but the most to the interest of our Principals, and believing that their interest as well as that of the public would be best promoted by laying the canal site South of what is termed the mountain ridge. (The part of Country contemplated to be explored by the other commissioners, on which to lay the canal site lying north of the mountain ridge (so called) and for the accomplishment of which they had already engaged a scientific Engineer to effect.) Those gentlemen however agreed at a meeting held in Buffalo or New Amsterdam in July last to pay the expense attending the exploration and laying off the site for a canal south of the mountain ridge, provided I would undertake the procuring a scientific Engineer, and direct his operations.

That being the alternative, or leave the route unexplored, I was compelled to order out my Mayvil Assistant subagent for its performance, there being not any other person of my acquaintance possessing sufficient scientific skill in this part of the country capable of accomplishing it with the necessary accuracy, and believing also that although he would not be actually performing duties in his office, that nevertheless he would be doing that which in the end would be equally profitable to the Company; and having made such arrangements as not to increase the expense in attending to the subagency I adopted that procedure. You have no

doubt observed in the Public Prints that the commissioners have made a report to the Legislature of the probable expense which may attend the completion of the whole route from Lake Erie to the Hudson River, by which it appears from very minute surveys, levels and examinations that a Canal connecting the navigation of the Hudson with Lake Erie, may be accomplished by pursuing the route north of the mountain ridge as explored and levelled by their Engineer for the sum of \$4,881,738 and by pursuing that part of the route explored under my direction, being South of the mountain Ridge, which passes through the 13th tier of Townships may be accomplished for \$4,571,813. Should this Herculean work ever be effected, and the canal take the direction as explored under my instructions, it would in its passage through the Holland Purchase intersect unsold land belonging for the great part to our Principals, and enhance the value of it, so much that it is presumed that portion immediately bounding the canal laid out in lots of from 10 to 20 chains, and extending in depth 80 chains, might be sold at prices from \$30 to \$50 pr. acre. And if we take the lowest sum, the quantity of acres, being about 30 thousand would amount to \$900,000. If we take the largest sum it would amount to \$1,500,000, and if we take the mean sum to \$1,200,000, which lands should a canal not be made will probably not produce more than \$150 or \$180 thousand Dollars.

From the view I have taken of this subject, and which I conceive to be a correct one, I think it manifest that the donation you have made of 100,000 acres of the mountains which lie along the Southern bounds of the Company's territory was judiciously made, in as much if the canal should be made and each alternate lot adjoining the canal had been donated, admitting them to amount to 15,000 acres, the Donation although not more than the 1-7 part of that you have proposed to donate would have been worth at least 3 times as much as the 100 m¹ acre of mountains would bring during the lapse of half an age. And should the canal be un-

dertaken, and not be completed in 28 years, the period you have ceded the lands, and they should then fall back to the proprietors, who during that period would be exempt from the payment of any Taxes charged thereon, Those mountains by that period according to the statistical rise of property in this country might be sold as high as probably they would at any subsequent period. Hence when I view this transaction in all its lights that occur to me I cannot help thinking that the manner you made the donation was wise and prudent, and at the same time the number of acres seems to evince great liberality in the proprietors of these lands, which cannot fail to occasion a correspondent accommodation on the part of the State. I enclose herewith the commissioners Report. I may be allowed to observe that the Canal project whether it is ever accomplished or otherwise has already been productive of profit and advantage to our principals in as much as that it has enabled me to increase the price of all the lands in the Northern part of the Company's Territory more than \$1.50 the acre, and I am persuaded has been a considerable auxiliary in promoting the sale of those lands. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT

BATAVIA, June 21, 1817.

The MS. of the above letter, in the Evans MSS., is a copy. The whereabouts of the original is not known.

CLINTON TO ELLICOTT.

NEW YORK 23 June 1817.

DEAR SIR: I have appointed 16th of July for the meeting of the Canal Commissioners at Utica. We had intended to meet on the 9th, but the removal of my family to Albany the beginning of the month will render the former period more convenient.

Yours sincerely

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

MR. ELLICOTT'S ADVICE SOUGHT.

ALBANY 20 October 1817.

DEAR SIR: A meeting of the Canal Commissioners will be held at Utica on the twenty fifth day of November at which time and place your attendance is earnestly requested. The jaunt may confirm the continuence of your good health and the pressure of business will not prevent your absence from home at that period.

We shall view the operations of the season and we shall want the benefit of your advice respecting our prospective measures.

Yours sincerely

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

LEGISLATIVE DELAY IS APPREHENDED.

ALBANY 12 Feby 1818.

DEAR SIR: . . . A Report of the Canal Commissioners has been laid before the Legislature which is a luminous and very satisfactory statement. It has not been acted on yet, and I fear the Legislature will not make the necessary appropriations to the speedy completion of the Canal.

Yours Respectfully

JEDIAH PRENDERGAST.¹

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

MR. ELLICOTT'S APPREHENSIONS.

BATAVIA Mar. 6, 1818.

His Excellency DE WITT CLINTON,
Albany.

DEAR SIR: I have received with much satisfaction the luminous report of the acting canal commissioners exhibit-

1. Member of the State Senate from the Western District.

ing the progress they have made in the prosecution of the grand canal. It appears to me the system they have adopted for the accomplishment of this great undertaking is not only commensurate with the object, but calculated to accomplish it with the greatest possible economy. It has however been intimated to me that the Honorable the Legislature seem rather adverse to a further prosecution of the Canals. This measure would be so extraordinary, and argue such want of stability, that I place little confidence in the information; more especially when I reflect that the Legislature of Georgia, a State with a population of 176,000 free persons, have appropriated merely for removing obstructions in the rivers of the State upwards of \$70,000, and when the objects as they relate to advantages to be derived by the respective improvements hardly admit of a comparison I therefore am under little apprehension that the Honorable Legislature would in any event abandon the object.

Mr. Busti when I saw him last summer requested me to ascertain whether it was the intention to accept the Donation of lands he proposed to make towards the accomplishment of the canal. I would be agreeable to receive some information on this subject as the Company in consequence closed all sales on those lands proposed as a Donation, and are paying heavy Taxes on them. I should be happy if you would drop me a line.

Meantime with great regard,

Your obed't Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

GOVERNOR CLINTON REASSURES MR. ELLICOTT.

ALBANY 11 March 1818

Private

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: Yours of the 6th is this moment received.

The Canal will undoubtedly be prosecuted to the West until completion. I propose to have the Western section marked out *in toto* and definitely next season to recommend

the passing of a law at the next session of the Legislature authorizing its being made: and I have no doubt this will be done. The truth is, opposition to the Canal is dwindling away. The miscreants in N. Y. who have opposed it from vile motives are properly appreciated—and the opposition of the South will cease because it is understood that we can do without national aid.

The whole will depend upon a wise & patriotic Legislature. Good members are all that is wanted. It is reported here that Evans has declined the senatorial nomination. This ought not to be—his nomination gave me great pleasure.

Busti ought to execute the deed. The moment it becomes the property of the State, it will not be the subject of taxation. The land in the supposed line of the Canal ought to be conveyed immediately. I will thank you for your advice about the best mode of settling the line of the Western section next session. Be assured that like good Christians we will persevere unto the *latter end*; but you must help us. Nature has been bountiful to you and fortune has blessed you with her smiles. You possess the power and I am persuaded the disposition to do good. The State looks to you for an example of active and useful patriotism, and I am sure there will be no disappointment.

My compliments to my friends Stevens and Evans and believe me yours sincerely

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

BUFFALO HARBOR MEMORIAL OF 1818.

BUFFALO, March 14, 1818.

DR SIR: The Inhabitants of this village have petitioned the Legislature for an appropriation of money to improve the harbor at this place and the memorial has been referred to a select committee who will probably report favorably if they can be convinced of the practicability of the object.

It is considered very important that they should be immediately furnished with a sketch of the parts adjacent to the mouth of the creek, depth of water, &c, and an attempt was yesterday made to take a survey, but the situation of the ice would not permit.

Understanding that you have heretofore taken a survey of the harbor I am requested to solicit the favor of you to forward me as soon as you can conveniently a sketch or copy of your map together with any other information on the subject which might be useful.

Should you prefer sending the original map, I will if you wish, request its safe return to you. Should you have made any calculation on the probable expence of constructing the piers &c your opinion on that subject would be desirable and any other information or assistance in relation to this business would be duly appreciated by all interested in the improvement of this village.

I am with respect, Sir,

Yr very ob. Serv.

CH. TOWNSEND,

One of the Committee of Inhabitants of Buffalo relative to harbor.

WILLIAM PEACOCK, *Esqr.*

Evans MSS.

TO LOCATE THE WESTERN SECTION.

ALBANY 24 March 1818.

DEAR SIR: The Canal Commissioners meet at this place on the 12th of April. Your presence is considered indispensable on several accounts: 1. It is necessary to fix the compensation of Messrs. Young & Holley. 2. We are desirous of consulting you about the running out the Western section & locating the Canal definitively. Do not neglect attending as it is highly important.

I am yours sincerely

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

GOVERNOR CLINTON'S AIMS.

ALBANY, 31 March, 1818.

DEAR SIR: I wrote to you lately requesting your attendance here as a canal commissioner on the 12th of April. As we intend to adopt a plan for running and marking out the western section of the canal, your presence then will be peculiarly important.

I send you by this mail both Reports. The first contains the map.

I am happy to learn that you approve of my conduct in relation to the late appointments. The approbation of meritorious men is in my estimation the evidence as well as the reward of merit. My object is to cultivate a spirit of good will & benevolence among the people—to unite our energies in favor of great & extensive improvements and to this end to discourage those factious combinations which are formed with a view to office and which are cherished by cupidity, intolerance & persecution. To secure the coöperation of the good & enlightened in the attainment of those important objects, will always afford the highest gratification to

Yours sincerely

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

Evans MSS.

MR. ELLICOTT DISCUSSES SALARIES AND DUTIES.

BATAVIA April 2, 1818

His Excellency DE WITT CLINTON,

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 24th ult. requesting my attendance in Albany at a meeting of the canal commissioners on the 12th Instant. Three weeks since on a sleighing visit I unfortunately sustained a casualty by a severe contusion on my right leg, which has confined me to my room and I shall

consider myself fortunate if the wound shall be in a situation to permit my leaving it a fortnight hence. This untoward accident prevents me from attending the meeting of the canal commissioners as notified by your Excellency.

May I say that doubtless the Legislature contemplated acting and active commissioners, and the circumstance of my agency under the Holland Company prevents me from attending to and performing the duties which would be proper for an active commissioner to perform; and as it may be that in consequence thereof extra duties are increased on the acting commissioners, and the objects of the Canal procrastinated and being desirous that no circumstance relating to myself should be attended with those consequences, I will suggest whether it would not be expedient and beneficial in relieving the other commissioners from an undue share of burden and responsibility for your Excellency to supercede the appointment which has so honorably been conferred on myself with another character more competent and at the same time whose avocations were not of a nature to prevent him from devoting his undivided attention to the important purposes with which the canal commissioners are the guardians in trust.

Having mentioned to you that an unfortunate casualty prevents me from attending the commissioners in Albany and that my indispensable avocations are such that it is out of my power to officiate (for the present otherwise than nominally) I might close this communication here; but as the President of the Board has been pleased to make known the objects for which the commissioners are to convene that gentleman will appreciate my intentions in offering a premature opinion on these subjects.

First then as to Salaries for Messrs Young & Holley. A salary ought always to be sufficient to induce a person to devote his whole mind time and attention to the object which he is to superintend, and be more in amount than he has a prospect of making by any other pursuit; otherwise his mind may be drawn off from the objects of his superintendence. Not knowing what other prospects in a pecuniary way those gentlemen may have I can hardly offer an

opinion what sum would command their undivided labors. Possibly a salary some where between two and three thousand Dollars pr. annum might afford the inducement. Less than two thousand Dollars would be insufficient and more than three thousand might possibly create (among a large portion of the people who had little knowledge of being placed in situations of great responsibility) a belief that the commissioners were aggrandizing themselves on the canal funds. It is evident however that the salaries of those gentlemen ought to be sufficient. Should it ever exceed \$3000 pr. annum to place on them the actual superintendence and accountability for all monies which should be chargeable to the canal, being themselves always present, thereby relieving the other commissioners who only occasionally exercised their functions, from pecuniary responsibility. I am also impressed with the opinion that it would be a judicious arrangement to organize under the direction of those gentlemen two canal commissioners officers (this may have been done but I have seen no mention made of it) one for the Northern and one for the western canal to be located along the line of canal at such place as would be most convenient for the gentlemen to superintend in person. I would even recommend that the gentlemen respectively should remove their families to, such positions that nothing should draw of their attentions from the objects of their care.

That each of those officers should be accommodated with an able and faithful accountant clerk well versed in keeping every description of accounts with a salary proportionate. I presume good clerks whom confidence might be reposed in could be obtained for \$1500 pr annum. In conducting all extensive concerns I believe it has been generally experienced that the management of accounts is one that requires as much or more attention than any other part.

An accountant having charge of money transactions ought not to have his mind burthened with any other affairs; otherwise he will be unable so to keep the books that a view can at any time be exhibited of the fiscal concerns to the commissioners superintending. An accountant clerk will always take care to have the necessary vouchers to enable

him to account for all expenditures; and no monies ought to be paid at any other place than at the Canal Commissioners office, and through the hands of the accountant clerk. This rule I early adopted in conducting the very extensive concerns of the Holland Company, and in consequence we have never had the least difficulty in rendering accounts acceptable to the Company's Agent General, and I presume there is no people who are more particular in their accounts than the Dutch. With these people an article be it what it may is only an article, and must be accounted for. I have been more minute in this part of the business relating to the accountability of monies than probably was proper for me, which however will be pardoned when I mention that it proceeds from the circumstances of observing among 4 list of names of persons whom the Comptroller has stated that advances of money had been made by the late Governor my name conspicuously exhibited, to whom it would seem an advance of \$2600 had been made. The truth is I never was an agent under Governor Tompkins; neither was any advances of money made to me by that Gentleman for any purpose whatever; but that on the application of his Excellency to me in the fall of 1812 (then on his way to the best of my recollection from the Niagara frontier Eastward) *to make him an advance of \$2000* (as I understood for the use of the Deputy Commissary of military stores, who was superintending at an arsenal at this place) accompanied with a written promise from his Excellency that such advance should be placed to my credit in the State Bank, with an assurance also on my part that on being furnished with the receipt of the cashier that such deposit was so made his written promise should be returned I made the first advance of \$2000 which was accordingly placed to my credit in the State Bank, and the Governor's written promise returned to him; and secondly I made an advance of \$600, which sum was in like manner placed to my credit in the State Bank by his Excellency; making together \$2600 the sum mentioned by the Comptroller.

For the proof of the preceding statement I pray leave to refer you to the enclosed copies of letters that passed be-

tween his Excellency and myself on that occasion. Had Governor Tompkins employed a correct accountant clerk to keep his monied transactions, it is not probable monies advanced by me on his application, and for his accommodation when repaid by him to me, would have been exhibited as an advance made to me, for which I was to account to him.

From the Report made by Mr. Geddis (if my memory serves) that gentleman ascertained the expence of excavating the southern route would not exceed \$350,000, and thereby form but two levels from Lake Erie to a place 7 miles East from Genesee River. If Mr. Geddis is correct I should not hesitate (was I to determine the business) in deciding at once in favor of the Northern Route. The advantages of one set of locks only to pass from the Lake Erie level to the Genesee level without farther interruption in such a long line of Canal would be incalculable; as well as Lake Erie affording an inexhaustible supply of water for the consumption of the canal without the aid of any of the streams that intersect it in its course. Those may all be wanted for domestic purposes, and if at any time insufficient the canal through its great Reservoir would supply all deficiencies. Hence I conclude the expenditure of \$350,000 more on the Northern than the Southern where such advantages are obtained ought to be incurred, and the northern route of course preferred. This however on the supposition of its practicability as assumed by Engineer Geddis.

Having no doubt exhausted your patience with this desultory Communication I will only add my grateful acknowledgments to the honorable the Legislature in their act for the acknowledgment of deeds, making an exception as to those which may be executed by myself on account of the Holland Land Company.

Meantime with great regard I have the honor to be

Your most obed't Serv't.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

REGARDING MR. ELLICOTT'S RESIGNATION.

ALBANY 1 May 1818

DEAR SIR: The state of Genl Van Rensselaer's health and the pressure of my official duties will prevent much of our attention to the active operations of the Canal Commissioners this season. We intend marking out the line of the Eastern & Western sections this season and completing as much as possible of the Middle and also of the Champlain Canal. The two acting Commissioners are not sufficient to superintend these complex multifarious and extended operations—and they will not listen to my resignation. Under these circumstances only could I think of accepting of your proffered resignation. If you send me a paper merely signifying it in such a way as to be disconnected from other matter, I shall take it into consideration. With my most sincere regard

I am yours truly

DE WITT CLINTON.

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

FOR THE BUFFALO HARBOR SURVEY.

ALBANY, 2 May, 1818.

DEAR SIR: I am authorized by an act of last session to appoint a fit & proper person to examine Buffalo Creek and to report the plan of a safe & commodious harbour at that place for vessels navigating Lake Erie, together with an estimate of the probable expense. This operation is to be performed before the next session of the Legislature and the person employed is allowed a compensation of three dollars pr day.

Will you recommend a suitable person for this purpose?

I am yours truly

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*





WILLIAM PEACOCK, AT 40.

FIRST SURVEYOR OF BUFFALO'S HARBOR.

**FROM AN OIL PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1820 BY TUTHILL, A PUPIL OF BENJAMIN
WEST, NOW IN THE POSSESSION OF MRS. JOHN W. BULKLEY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

MR. PEACOCK SELECTED FOR SURVEY OF BUFFALO HARBOR.

ALBANY, 18 June, 1818.

DEAR SIR: I enclose you an appointment for Mr. Peacock as Commissioner to report on a harbor for Buffalo. I am pleased that you have selected a person so well qualified and so meritorious.

I also transmit a copy of the Act on which the appointment is predicated & which will sufficiently explain the powers and duties of the Commissioner.

I am yours with sincere regard

DE WITT CLINTON

J. ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

N. B. I intend to summon a meeting of the Canal Commissioners soon, at which the presence of all will be necessary, and active operations during the season will be required for at least a majority of the Board. The Champlain Canal will require the constant supervision of one Commissioner, and there ought at least to be two to superintend the complicated operations on the western. If you still persist in your intention to resign as heretofore intimated to me (which I should greatly regret if you could attend personally to the trust) you will please to signify it to me immediately, as in that case I will not summon you to the contemplated meeting and I shall forthwith proceed to make the necessary resulting arrangement. Both canals are in a most prosperous train.

Evans MSS.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT TO WM. PEACOCK ON HIS APPOINTMENT.

BATAVIA, 26th June, 1818.

WILLIAM PEACOCK, *Esquire,*
Mayville.

DEAR SIR: I received by last mail from his Excellency the Governor the enclosed Commission and act of the Leg-

islature relative to the harbour of Buffalo Creek in the County of Niagara, which are covered under the same envelope with this letter.

I am sensible you will not thank me for recommending you to his Excellency as a suitable person for the accomplishment of the object contemplated by the act; but being called on by the Governor to designate some person qualified for its performance, and knowing not any one as suitable as yourself, I was induced to name you to him. This however I should not have done, but from the little business transacted at this office I was impressed with the opinion that you could leave your station last of July, August or September, for its performance, when I think it likely Brother Benjamin will be at home, and we may both visit Buffalo. I have not received a letter from you since your sickness. I hope you delay with a view of calling in person and furnishing a statement of the Amount of Sales you have made and bringing with you all the receipts and in time to send it with my Report, which will leave this place in eight or ten days.

I am most respectfully your obed't Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

Evans MSS.

WILLIAM PEACOCK'S COMMISSION.

By DE WITT CLINTON, Governor of the State of New York.

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

KNOW YE that I do hereby appoint William Peacock of Chautauque County Esquire a Commissioner to examine the outlet of Buffalo Creek and cause a survey and plan to be made for the improvement of the said outlet so as to form a safe and commodious harbour for vessels navigating Lake Erie together with an estimate of the probable expense. And also to perform all the other duties enjoined upon the said Commissioner by the act entitled "An Act

relative to the Harbor of Buffalo Creek in the County of Niagara," passed 10th April 1818.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my
[SEAL] name and the Privy Seal of the State at the City
of Albany this 18th day of June Anno Domini
1818.

DE WITT CLINTON

Evans MSS.

MR. ELLICOTT RESIGNS AS CANAL COMMISSIONER.

BATAVIA June 29, 1818.

His Excellency DE WITT CLINTON.

DEAR SIR: . . . Relating to my personal attendance in the prosecution of the canal my avocations in the management and conducting the very extensive Land Agency of the Holland Company, which devolves on me by my Contract with them, necessarily prevents me from devoting personally my time to any other pursuit. The western Canal line being in its whole extent of great length, and as you justly observe involving a variety of complicated operations will require at least two active commissioners to superintend them (and as I have before stated my avocations preventing a personal participation) I feel it an incumbent duty to decline or resign the honorable appointment confided in me by the Legislature into the hands of your Excellency; which will enable your Excellency more effectually to make such arrangement as will have for its object the more advantageous prosecution of the great work.

It will be gratifying to hear occasionally of the progress of the undertaking.

I have the honor to be

Your most obed't Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THE LAND GRANT—THE WALK-IN-THE-WATER.

BATAVIA Aug. 24, 1818.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia.

MY DEAR SIR: . . . Respecting my resignation of commissioner of the Canal the truth was I could not perform both the duty which devolved on a commissioner & perform the duties of my agency. To perform the duties of a commissioner it would be necessary to be occasionally at the Canal and occasionally meeting the other commissioners in Albany; and oftentimes with only ten or twelve Days notice when it was out of my power consistently with the agency duties to attend. I was therefore necessitated to resign one or the other, and I chose to resign that of commissioner. . . .

Relating to the 100 M acre Donation of lands on the Allegany River to the Canal I was once informed by Mr. Clinton that if it was conveyed to the State all Taxes would of course cease on it. He did not mention whether to be conveyed unconditionally or otherwise. It appears to me, when it is, or if it is ever conveyed to the State that the State ought to be taxed for it the same that an individual would be; otherwise it will as it relates to taxes only increase the Amount of tax to be paid on other lands, and no benefit will accrue to the Holland Company as it relates to a decrease of Taxes. In the course of the winter Mr. Clinton mentioned to me that he intended to have the western section of the Canal staked out during this summer. Nothing of the kind however has been done, and I think it not probable that it will be done the present season. I have recently been informed through a source I should in former times have deemed worthy of confidence that it is not the intention to prosecute the canal at present further than the Seneca river. There are however so many intrigues going on by the knowing ones that it is difficult for those of us not in the Cabinet to know the truth of reports. . . .

The Lake Erie Steam Boat, the erection of which was commenced the late winter, is now compleated; it was built

below the Rapids at the outlet of the lake, and I am told has made two attempts to ascend the rapids into the lake, but unsuccessful, and I think it probable she will have [have] (as other vessels) to be towed up with oxen traversing the beach. I have some thoughts of making a trip in this boat in the Course of the summer to Detroit and which I presume you would have no objection to, as it will not require a period greater than a week or two from home to perform the tour. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

MR. BUSTI REGRETS THE RESIGNATION.

PHILADELPHIA 4th September, 1818.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*,
Batavia.

DEAR SIR: . . . Your demission as Commissioner to the Canal supported by reason of incompatibility with your duties of stationary Agent I cannot condemn. This however does not take away any part of the regret I feel at your giving it in at the important epoch of deciding whether intrigue has to stop the work at the Seneca lake or whether the scheme is to be followed up. Should the last prove to be the fact as the Commissioners must have superintendents of every kind on the spot I cannot dissemble my wish that you might accept of a subaltern employment which without infringing too much on your time might influence in some degree the important question relative to the direction of the canal. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

BUFFALO CITIZENS TO MR. PEACOCK.

BUFFALO, Sept. 7, 1818.

SIR: We are informed that you have been appointed the Commissioner under the act of the Legislature of April

20, 1818, to survey the outlet of Buffalo Creek and to examine relative to the expediency of improving its harbor.

As the season will soon arrive when the business of surveying it will be unpleasant and attended with some difficulties and as the inhabitants of this place generally are very anxious that it should be attended to as soon as convenient, we are induced by request of several gentlemen to solicit your acceptance of the appointment, and if any aid can be given, to tender you their and our services in any manner in which we can be useful.

We are very respectfully, Sir,

Your ob't Serv'ts,

OLIVER FORWARD

SAM'L WILKESON

CH. TOWNSEND

EBENEZER JOHNSON

WILLIAM PEACOCK, *Esq.*

Evans MSS.

GOVERNOR CLINTON REPORTS PROGRESS.

UTICA 25 Sept 1818

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

MY DEAR SIR: The Canal Commissioners are now in session and will finish their business this day. As the middle section of the Erie, and the Champlain Canal will in all human probability be completed next year, the subject of continuation will occupy the attention of the Legislature at their next session: and it will be well to prepare the public mind for the selection of the most important section. My mind is decidedly in favor of the Western—and I should wish to be favored by you in extenso with your views on this subject. I am happy to inform you that the progress of the canal exceeds my most sanguine expectations, both as it respects quantity and cheapness of operation. My regret for your resignation has not ceased but is diminished by the consideration of the useful services of your successor:¹ He &

1. Ephraim Hart.

Holley officiate in person on the Western & Young on the Northern Canal. With my best compliments to your brother, Stevens & Evans

I am your sincere friend

DE WITT CLINTON.

ADVICES TO AGENT BUSTI.

BATAVIA October 12, 1818

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia.

MY DEAR SIR: . . . I have received a letter from the President of the Canal Commissioners Gov. Clinton under Date the 25th ult. mentioning that the Progress of the Canal exceeds his most sanguine expectations both as it respects quantity and cheapness of operation, and that the middle section of the Erie and the Champlain Canal will in all human probability be compleated the next season; that he is very desirous measures may be taken to commence the western section of the Erie Canal in the ensuing Spring, and that all his efforts will be used to prevail on the Legislature to make provision for prosecuting the grand project to its final completion, and solicits the aid of all friends of the canal to use their best endeavors in aiding that object. It therefore appears that the information I had received some time since and mentioned to you that it was not intended for the present to prosecute the Canal farther than the Seneca River was incorrect, and no doubt promulgated to answer some political purposes. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

THE CANAL EXPECTED TO SWELL THE HOLLAND LAND CO.'S RECEIPTS.

BATAVIA, Octo. — 1818

PAUL BUSTI, *Esquire,*
Philadelphia.

MY DEAR SIR: . . . Mr. Holley one of the acting Canal Commissioners called on me a few days since and as-

sures me that at least sixty miles of the middle section of the Canal will be accomplished the ensuing season; that is to say from Onondaga Salt works to Utica; and he thinks the greater part of the Canal between these salt works and the Seneca river will by the same period be navigable.

An object will be to endeavor to obtain an act of the Legislature at their ensuing session to undertake the excavation of the western section terminating with the eastern extremity of Lake Erie at Buffalo. Should we succeed in obtaining an act for the prosecution of that object I think doubtless many wealthy farmers will emigrate from the Atlantic States and purchase out those of our settlers who own lands in the vicinity of the canal route [who] are not in a situation to make payment, and by this means increase our receipts; as it is from the second hand purchaser the largest share of payments are made. . . .

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

RELATING TO A HARBOR AT BUFFALO.

BATAVIA December 14, 1818.

JONAS HARRISON, *Esquire*,
Buffalo.

SIR: I have received the letter you done me the honor to address to me pursuant to the request of the Committee of Buffalo village in relation to a harbour at the outlet of Buffalo Creek with Lake Erie, and shall merely remark than an act passed the last Legislature (agreeably as I understood to the Petition of a former Buffalo Committee) authorizing the Governor to appoint some fit and proper person whose duty it shall be to examine the outlet of Buffalo Creek and cause a survey and plan to be made of such improvement as he may think fit and proper for the improvement of the said outlet so as to form a safe and commodious harbour for vessels navigating Lake Erie together with an Estimate of the probable expence, and that he report the same to the next Legislature; that the said commissioner was appointed and made the survey, and I presume will report as contemplated

by the act. It appears to me therefore so far as regards this Business with the Legislature it is in the proper train without any aid from me, and circumstanced as I am I should feel for certain reasons a delicacy by aiding in a direct manner although indirectly I should unquestionably afford all the assistance I could to forward the views of the Buffalo Committee; at the same time you will permit me to mention that it has always been my opinion that the most proper way was to commence this project with the money we could raise from our own subscriptions, and if the accomplishment of the object to answer the end in view was greater than our means, then to petition to the Legislature for some aid. I have on account of the Holland Company and self about \$3500, which I shall appropriate to this object, if the plan appears to me a feasible one; and I am persuaded that sum alone, provided the business should be conducted with a due regard to economy will effect the object so far as to give all the vessels that navigate Lake Erie free egress and regress with the harbour in the mouth of Buffalo Creek. When I mention due regard to economy I mean such economy as an individual would use in his own concerns such as Judge Porter's economy in the erection of his bridge over an impassable arm of the Niagara to Goat island; and my opinion is the same labor as well directed would accomplish the desired object.

Accept Sir for yourself, and the Committee of Buffalo the assurance of the high consideration with which I have the honor to be

Your & their most obd't Serv't

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

CANAL PROSPECTS IN 1819.

ALBANY January 17, 1819.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esquire,*
Batavia.

DEAR UNCLE: . . . The canal appears to be gaining popularity. An animated debate took place in the Assembly

yesterday on the adoption of the answer to His Excellency's speech. Root moved a substitute to that part of it relating to the great Canal. He declared he had doubts of the practicability of making it, without heaping burthens on the people they could not bear, and he wished the members not to commit themselves too hastily. Young Hamilton a son of Alexander Hamilton accused the governor of stating falsehoods in his speech—he is a weak young man and rendered himself quite ridiculous. Oakley Duer, J. R. Van Renselaer and German the speaker, the house being in committee of the whole, spoke at length in favor of the canal. Mr. Van Renselaer's speech was luminous and replete with solid argument. He evinced a thorough knowledge of the finances of the State and proved to my satisfaction and, I presume, to that of the house that the Resources of the State were fully adequate to the completion of that great object, as the answer was adopted by a great majority. The prospect is in favor of the passage of a law authorizing the Commissioners to enter into Contracts for the completion of the work from Lake Erie to the Hudson. . . .

DAVID E. EVANS.

WM. PEACOCK'S REPORT ON BUFFALO HARBOR, JANUARY, 1819.

The undersigned, a Commissioner appointed by virtue of an Act of the Legislature of the State of New York, passed April 10th, 1818, entitled "an Act relative to the Harbour of Buffalo Creek in the County of Niagara," to examine the outlet of Buffalo Creek and cause a Survey and Plan of such improvement as he may think fit and proper for the improvement of the said outlet so as to form a safe and commodious Harbour for vessels navigating Lake Erie, together with an estimate of the probable expense" has the honour of submitting to the consideration of the Legislature, the following report of his survey and Estimates.

The annexed map gives the distance on the shore of Lake Erie of about three miles. The different depths of

water during that extent, have been ascertained by actual survey, and the bottom of the Lake carefully examined to ascertain its quality and situation. It will be seen by a reference to the Map that at the greatest depth penetrated the bottom is composed of a red tenacious clay which affords the most favourable ground to hold and support Piles entering it, and which has been penetrated in many places to the depth of 6 feet by a rod of Iron fitted for that purpose.

The figures at the left hand of the different positions taken for survey, show the distance from the shore of the Lake in Rods; the left exterior line represents the surface of the Lake, and the right gives the profile or view of the bottom at the various distances from shore as represented. The figures in red at the right hand give the different Depths of water at their respective distances in feet and decimals of a foot from the Shore. The dotted line shows the bottom to be sand and gravel and the smooth or painted line designates a clay bottom. The different depths of Buffalo Creek for a considerable distance above its entrance into the lake are designated by the numbers 11, 12, 14, 13, 12 &c. marked in Red. The entrance into the mouth of Buffalo Creek during the summer months is rendered difficult in consequence of the vast quantities of sand and gravel which are constantly accumulating during the violence of the winds which blow from the Lake to the Shore; and the current of the stream, when thus accumulated is not sufficiently powerful to dislodge and scatter them and to force them from their beds back into the Lake from whence they were driven. In some instances, in a time of heavy floods, a passage is cut across the gravelly point thro' which the whole body of the water of the creek discharges itself into the Lake, but the flood subsiding, this is again soon filled up with new accumulations of sand & gravel. Sometimes it lays deposited on both sides of the creek at high floods, and leaving a uniform depth of water in the Creek of 12 feet into the Lake.

To provide a remedy for this evil and to secure vessels entering the mouth of Buffalo Creek as well against the

effect of storms as other accidents, the undersigned would respectfully recommend the construction of a Stone Pier, commencing at the Point A on Map No. 2, which shall extend into the Lake 990 feet—this will give 13 feet water on a Clay Bottom—the height of the Pier to be 6 Feet above the common level of the Lake—its breadth at bottom to be 30 feet and at top 10 feet. The estimated expense of constructing a work of this description will cost \$12,787 25-100. Materials for the erection of this Pier & of the best kind may be procured in abundance from Bird Island, distant from the spot contemplated about 1 & $\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and also at the distance of from 4 to 6, 8 & 10 miles on the shore of Lake Erie above the place contemplated, and the transportation of the whole can be effected by water-carriage. This it is believed would be the most effectual and durable method of securing the mouth of Buffalo Creek against the encroachments of sand & gravel. But should it be deemed too expensive, another mode is suggested by extending a double row of Piles of wood, 990 feet into the Lake, 500 Piles on each side (the rows to be 20 feet apart) each pile to fill a space of nearly 2 feet. To secure and render more permanent this construction, let an abutment averaging 20 feet square & 20 feet high be placed at the end of the Pile-work, to be composed of hewn timber, fitted & matched together and the whole filled in with stone. The intermediate space between this row of Pile-work to be filled up with brush and stone, two-thirds brush and the remaining third stone, the brush can be readily procured in the immediate vicinity of the place and the stone from the places already mentioned.

In the selection of the materials for the work upon the last mentioned plan, for security and durability, it is deemed that white-oak would be the most desirable as it may be found in sufficient quantities, on the margin of the Lake above & from thence easily floated down. The timber composing these Piles to be eighteen inches diameter and their average height above the common water surface 7 feet, on every 6th or 7th pile thro't the whole extent, let Caps of timber be framed connecting the piles on the opposite sides

together. These caps or cross pieces of Timber will not only have a tendency to strengthen the work itself; and secure to better advantage within their place of deposit the materials with which the space between the piles is filled up; but they will serve as supporters on which pieces of timber as string-pieces may be placed, and planks may be laid thereon, thus forming a bridge or passage connecting the shore with the abutment; and as it is contemplated to place a Lamp at the end of the Pier for the purpose of enabling vessels in the dark to go round the end of the work in safety, this method would always afford a safe and easy communication with the shore. The estimated expense of constructing a work of this kind will cost \$10,514 37-100.

If it should be deemed most expedient to construct the Pier entirely of stone as being the least destructible or liable to decay, then the following plan and estimate is submitted:

Recapitulation of the Expense of the Stone Pier.

Length of pier	990	feet
Average heighth	13 43-100	"
Width at bottom	30	"
do at top	10	"
Containing 2077 45-100 Cords of Stone @ \$5 pr. Cord	\$10,387 25	
200 Piles @ \$2 pr. pile	400 00	
Superintendence and extra expences	2,000 00	

Aggregate expence of Stone Pier\$12,787 25

It is to be observed here, that in the construction of this Pier or mole, no extra or mechanical labour is requisite, the stones being barely deposited in the water and by a little care form the desired slope required. Should, however, hereafter, the Public funds warrant, and the patronage of the Legislature sanction it, a wall might be constructed from the surface of the water upward, which would unite elegance with durability.

Should, however, the other plan suggested, meet with more general approbation, the result is estimated as follows:

Recapitulation of the Expense of erecting the Wooden Pier 1010 feet in length.

The abutment at an average of 20 feet square and 20 feet in height, composed of hewn timber framed and locked together by strong ties and braces and filled with stone, estimated expense	\$ 675 00
1000 white-oak Piles inserted in the bottom of the Lake at \$2 pr. Pile	2,000 00
100 Cap-Pieces (white-oak) framed on top of Piles @ \$2 pr. piece	200 00
3960 feet in length for string-pieces @ 10 cents pr. foot ..	396 00
19800 superficial feet 2 Inch plank @ \$20 per M.	396 00
692 48-100 Cords Stone @ \$5 pr. Cord	3,462 40
1384 97-100 Cords of Brush @ \$1 pr. Cord	1,384 97
Superintendence and extra expences as above	2,000 00
<hr/>	
Aggregate expence of wooden Pier	\$10,514 37

It will readily be perceived by a comparison of these respective estimates, that the expenses of erecting solid and durable works of stone, instead of those constructed of more perishable materials, will only exceed in amount, the inconsiderable sum of \$2,272.88-100. It is worthy of remark also, that should the work be constructed of solid materials, it would probably require much less expenditures hereafter to repair it.

In selecting *Buffalo Creek* as the most eligible spot for a harbour at the Eastern extremity of Lake Erie, the undersigned has been governed by the following considerations:

First. In the Spring of the year at the time of the breaking up of the ice in the Creek & that stream discharging a great quantity of water into the Lake, it cuts a passage through the Gravel point at or near the place marked P. on the Map; and forms a channel 12 feet in depth through out into the Lake. It is to be observed that the water of the creek has its full force at that season of the year, in consequence of the large bodies of Ice collected in the Lake near the mouth of the creek, & which form, in some measure, a barrier against the violence of the water in the Lake, thereby answering all the purposes of a Pier, until the ice gradually

dissolves, which is one of the most conclusive reasons for locating the work at the place designated on the Map.

But there are other reasons in favour of the same place, viz: By erecting the Pier some distance above the mouth of the Creek, far enough to leave an *area* of sufficient extent for the sand and gravel that may be carried down by the water of the Creek and deposited along its margin on the upper side, thereby in process of time, forming between the *pier* and the channel of the creek, a *beach or flat* that will give additional support and durability to the work proposed to be erected. It is the opinion of the undersigned that if a sufficient space is not allowed for the deposit of the sand and gravel that would be lodged along on the upper side of the Creek by the force of the water in high freshes, the whole contents of the gravel bar, now lying across the mouth of the Creek, would only be carried still farther into the lake, and thereby add to the same obstructions which are already formed.

Should it be objected that the Creek is not the proper place to form a Harbour by reason of the continual deposits of alluvian brought down by the waters of the creek, that objection might be deemed a serious one, if the waters of the creek were discharged into the lake at the distance of 4 or 6 miles above, where no current is to be found in the water of the lake. That the lake has a current of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile an hour immediately at the end of the contemplated Pier, and that the united force of both currents, Lake & Creek, will continually carry off all those particles of alluvial earth below the channel, contemplated for the passage of Vessels into the Creek, and will, by the increased velocity of the water, in its progress out of the Lake, float the particles of matter over the rapids below Bird-Island.

Upon as full and careful an examination therefore, of the subject as the undersigned has been able to bestow upon it, he does not hesitate in pronouncing his *most decided* opinion, that at or near the mouth of Buffalo Creek, is the most suitable and proper place, to form "a safe and commodious harbour" at the Eastern end of Lake Erie.

When the increasing commerce of the Western section of the State is duly considered and a proper estimate made of its probable future extension, it cannot fail, to appear obvious, that it is of the deepest Interest to the People of that section and to the State generally, that every obstacle to the full and free use of its navigable Waters should as far as practicable be removed without delay. Bounding on a foreign & a rival province, every day becoming more and more jealous of the commercial prosperity of the U. S. and of the State of New York in particular, unless every facility within the power of Government to bestow is granted to those meritorious citizens who are engaged in the Lake trade, the period cannot be very remote when the Subjects of Canada will enjoy a superior share of those advantages and that commerce which Nature has intended should be distributed equally among all.

The superiour advantages at present possessed by the British opposite Buffalo, cannot fail to procure for them a correspondent share of the trade of Lake Erie and the upper Waters.

To a Government, characterized by Mercantile cupidity and which binds all the resources of a vast and overwhelming commerce to the purposes of its own ambition, no obstacle to commercial superiority will be considered too insurmountable to be removed. To the natural advantages already possessed, it may be confidently expected that they will superadd all the aids which art can bestow to continue and if possible increase that superiority. Not a single movement has of late been made, or is at present making to improve the internal navigation of the State, but seems to have excited on their part a correspondent degree of zeal and to have urged them forward to the most indefatigable exertions.

Buffalo from its local situation is apparently the key which opens to the People of the State of New York a most stupendous path of navigation and of commerce extending the distance of more than 2000 Miles. The existing disadvantages attending its harbour, it is believed, may be entirely removed, by adopting the measures above sug-

gested and thus an uninterrupted chain of water communicating by means of the Canal when that great and important work shall have been completed, be forever secured between the City of New York and indeed the whole Atlantic Sea-Board & the upper Lakes. By effecting such improvements, the wealth, the industry and enterprise of the different sections of the State will be more closely interwoven, and the products of each be interchanged with greater facility. In fine, it would give a spring & impulse to the agriculture and the commerce of the State, at its Western extremity which could hardly fail to act and react until its vigorous influence should be felt by the whole community:—Considerations of such magnitude united to the view of the rapidly increasing population of the State of N. Y. and the States and Territories West and South West who would alike be benefitted by a commerce on the Lakes, more especially when the amount required to be expended is so very trifling and inconsiderable, would seem to indicate a necessity of the Speedy accomplishment of an object which promises so many results of incalculable Public benefit.

All of which is Respectfully submitted

WILLIAM PEACOCK

Mayville, Chautauque County

Jan'y 18th, 1819

MR. ELLICOTT URGES WORK ON THE WESTERN SECTION.

BATAVIA Feb. 10, 1819.

His Excellency DE WITT CLINTON.

DEAR SIR: I have with the most sincere pleasure received at your hands the very lucid report of the Canal Commissioners to the Legislature of the progress of that great work under their care & management. In all the transactions of the honorable the Commissioners have I discovered nought else than direction steady as the hand of time to one object. Under the guidance of such men the Canal must and will

be compleated in a term much shorter than the most sanguine could have calculated on or anticipated.

It is very desirable that the actual line of Canal should be laid off and located between the Seneca river & Lake Erie. This object I had understood was in contemplation to have been accomplished last season. Nothing however having been done in that way induced some people to report that it was not the intention to work the Canal further westward than the Seneca river for the present, and I am persuaded not an inconsiderable number of the people are of that opinion;—an opinion which if something should not be done in the way of locating the actual site of the Canal between those places the coming season will become more prevalent. You will therefore permit me to suggest the propriety of locating the Canal from the Seneca river to Lake Erie the present season, and believe me very assuredly and most respectfully

Your obed't Servant

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

STATUS OF CANAL AND HARBOR.

ALBANY Feby 13, 1819.

[to JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR UNCLE: . . . The canal question has not yet been brought forward in either house. I am apprehensive the governor thinks the Martling men will not appose it. I am certain that the principal men in that party will be its warmest supporters, and I am surprised at the delay of the Commissioners in not offering their propositions. The Buffalo harbor will not I am fearful meet with many supporters—the Assembly appears to be very unwilling to part with the State's money. however we shall do our utmost. . . .

DAVID E. EVANS.

GOV. CLINTON'S ACCURATE ESTIMATE OF TIME NEEDED.

ALBANY 19 February 1819.

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR SIR: The Canal Commissioners have this day in a communication to a Joint Committee gave an explicit opinion in favor of the completion of the Western section of the Erie Canal. We propose to explore the three routes and to lay out the line of the Canal definitively next season and to make some contracts so as to be enabled to commence the work at the opening of the season after that. We contemplate the expenditure of 800,000 dollars a year and hope to complete the whole of the canal in 6 years. There will be little open but much secret opposition to this measure but it will prevail. Its insidious enemies will shift the ground of direct hostility—but they will do all the mischief they can either by urging the previous finishing of the middle section or a preference for the Eastern section. . . .

DE WITT CLINTON

THE WESTERN SECTION—SOURCES OF OPPOSITION.

ALBANY 23 February 1819

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

MY DEAR SIR: I enclose a Report &c of the Joint Committee of the Senate & Assembly relative to the Erie & Champlain Canals. You will perceive that the Committee concurs in opinion with the Commissioners as to the immediate completion of the Western section of the former. I have no doubt but that the Legislature will sanction the Report of the Committee.

The enemies of these great improvements have abandoned the field of direct opposition, but their enmity is no less envenomed on account of its insidious character: They will urge the previous completion of the Eastern section, with a view to injure the whole operation and to subserve the selfish views of a few persons on our Niagara frontier.

I am yours truly

DE WITT CLINTON

BUFFALO HARBOR AND THE LEGISLATURE OF 1819.

ALBANY February 25, 1819

[To JOSEPH ELLICOTT]

DEAR UNCLE: . . . The joint committee of the Senate and Assembly on internal Improvements this evening agreed to offer the following proposition to the two houses. To loan to the Citizens of Buffalo Twelve thousand Dollars for five years without interest for the purpose of constructing a harbor security to [be] approved of by the comptroller to be taken. But in case the Canal Commissioners shall determine to take the canal out of Buffalo creek then the security to be released and the sum granted to be considered a donation from the State. The foolish project of a company for the purpose of forming a harbor which you so justly in my opinion deprecate had like to have been the means of ruining all chance of obtaining any grant whatever. I was certain it would have a bad effect and hoped it would not be discovered by any of the Committee but Gen'l J. Rutser van Renselaer found the notice for it to day in one of the newspapers and asked me if it would not be best to incorporate such a company as he knew it would be extremely difficult to get any thing from the State. I told him it would not—that such incorporations were at all times very objectionable and that I thought there was no more propriety in incorporating a company for that purpose than there would be for incorporating one for the improvement of the Navigators of the Hudson and taxing the vessels that passed up and down that River and that in fact I considered that it would not be so impolitic to tax the vessels on the Hudson as it would those on the Lake for those of the former must pass along it and those of the latter might if they chose and undoubtedly would if it was to their advantage anchor at Fort Erie from whence their cargoes would pass through the British territory. He was pleased to say my remarks were just and that as he thought none of the committee except himself had seen the notice for the contemplated application for an act to charter a company he should keep it secret. I agreed with him as to the

propriety of the manner he proposed to present the subject to the two houses. It has not the appearance of an absolute gift yet I am persuaded it will be so in fact, for I think there cannot be a doubt but what the Canal Commissioners will connect the canal with Buffalo creek and possibly they may determine to do so next summer.

I send you herewith a copy of the Report of the Committee by which you will see the western section will be next acted upon. I have not a shadow of doubt but what a Law will be passed this winter authorizing the completion of that section. I believe I know the feelings of as many members on that subject as almost any other person in Albany. The Canal Commissioners thought it would be unnecessary to pass a law authorizing the completion of both the western & eastern sections as they could employ as many hands as the State could furnish the means of paying on the western alone. Young was in favor of a Law authorizing the whole line to be finished not with a view of going on with the whole eastern section till the western was finished, but to enable the commissioners to excavate the canal and construct the locks at the Little Falls. He stated that it would require probably two years more to finish the works at that point than at any other between Utica and Tide Water as the labor would be great and no more men could be employed there than at the same extent of space elsewhere and that to have the whole eastern section completed at the same time the work at that place should be commenced two years earlier than at the other parts. This reasoning appeared to me to be good but it was overruled. I was not one of the committee but made a point to attend all their meetings. . . .

DAVID E. EVANS.

BUFFALO HARBOR OPPONENTS.

ALBANY 8 March 1819

SIR: . . . The Harbor application was referred to a joint committee of both houses of the subject of Internal

Improvement, who have reported a bill authorizing a loan on individual security without interest, which is to be expended by the canal commissioners & the loan to be remitted if the commissioners shall be of opinion that the harbor will be necessary or useful as connected with the Great Canal.

It is uncertain whether the bill will pass, there is considerable opposition to it from those interested in or partial to Black Rock and from those usually opposed to internal improvements of any nature.

I am very respectfully, Sir,

Your obed't Serv.

CH. TOWNSEND.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*

MR. BUSTI NOW CONFIRMS THE LAND DONATION.

PHILADA 16th March 1819

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*,
Batavia.

DEAR SIR: . . . The completion of the Western Canal having been assented to by the Legislature the grant of the A 100/m Tract will be made operative under the old conditions. To them I have procured the additional insertion that the State shall be subjected to the payment of the County taxes as laid upon individual property.

Probably the Canal works will be undertaken during the approaching season, if the long pending question between the Northern & Southern direction has been decided on. I wish it may be for the name of the Canal ought to attract attention to the lands and the money to be expended in the work must inspire new life into the country. Buffalo will likewise experience permanent advantages from it and from the meditated improvements of its harbour. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

MR. BUSTI'S "OLD SISTEM" OF MIND.

PHILADELPHIA 12th April, 1819

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esq.*,
Batavia.

DEAR SIR: . . . The conditions affixed originally to the Grant for the Canal and the explicit one obliging the State to share its proportion in the County taxes have raised difficulties in the acceptance which I had never expected. I shall not dwell on this not doubting that Senator Evans will give you the whole history. I for my part firmly believe that the whole originates in misconceptions formed at the time the grant was offered. It was trumpeted about by the Commissioners without ever mentioning that it was conditional. This novelty starts suspicions and partymen ever alert to profit of every incident avail themselves of this general ignorance of a fact to censure the donors and the first solicitor of the donative. I had always imagined De Witt Clinton had the whole of the Western of the State in his favor. It is with no small surprise I observe the Genesee papers all enlisted in running him down. In this new example of the instability of popular favor I draw the confirmation of the goodness of my old sistem never to espouse the cause of any man, nor to embark in any party. I enjoy it is true no triumph but on the other hand I suffer not the mortifications of a defeat. The impartiality thus observed if it does not make no warm friends neither does it create me violent enemies. Perhaps is it to be ascribed to this that no opposition was met by the late petition in behalf of alien land owners. . . .

PAUL BUSTI.

BUFFALO CITIZENS TO PAUL BUSTI.

BUFFALO, April 30th, 1820.

SIR: We have the honor to enclose you a copy of an Act passed by the Legislature of this State authorizing a loan to construct a Harbor at this place, and being desirous of obtaining some aid from the Holl'd L'd Comp'y in rela-

tion thereto, it may be proper briefly to mention the circumstances which led to the passage of the Act and also the reasons which have hitherto operated to prevent its being carried into effect—believing from the importance of the Object (particularly to Your Comp’y) that if You should not have already been apprised of the facts that the relation will neither be uninteresting or unprofitable.

Many of the Citizens of this Village have settled here and purchased Lots at high prices in consequence of the Assurances of Mr. Ellicott that means were provided and measures would shortly be taken to make a safe and commodious harbor at the mouth of Buffalo Creek. Years having passed without any appearance of commencing it, altho’ promises were from year to year repeated, the inhabitants determined to apply to the Legislature for aid, and in 1818 a law was passed under which Wm Peacock was appointed to survey the harbor and report an Estimate of the expence.

The inhabitants also applied again to Mr. Ellicott and Solicited some aid, and he on the 14th Decem’r of that year replied, that he had “on account of the Holl’d L’d Comp’y and himself about \$3500. which he should appropriate to this object if the plan (Mr. Peacock) should be a feasible one and he was persuaded that that sum alone provided that the business should be conducted with a due regard to economy would effect that object.” Believing that sum inadequate and that there was but little probability of even that being expended, application was again made to the Legislature in 1819 for a grant of Money, but instead of a donation, which was expected, an Act was passed authorizing a loan on individual Security. This at the time was supposed would enable the persons named in the law to improve the harbor without much personal risk or liability as it was believed that the canal would terminate at this place, and that the Canal Commissioners would undertake the work and authorize the loan to be converted into part of the Canal fund; and the other persons named in the law declining to give the Security required, the undersigned have executed Bonds & Mortgages and obtained collateral Security and are now authorized to expend the money.

The Commissioners since the passing of the law have procured Surveys to be made at two different times and altho' they are satisfied of the feasibility of effecting the object they decline making the decision required by law as they have not yet determined on the route of the Canal at this extremity of it.

From their Report to the Legislature and from other circumstances we are induced to believe that it may terminate at the Tonnewanta Creek. In that event the harbor at this place would be useless to the State and of but little value to us as the business of this place would be removed to the vicinity of Grand Island.

The Commissioners also decline giving us any assurances that we shall be reimbursed our expences from vessels entering the Harbor.

Notwithstanding these discouraging appearances we propose should we receive a favorable reply to this proposition, to construct a pier nearly similar to that proposed by Mr. Peacock and which we understand is approved of by Mr. Ellicott, and we have to Solicit the aid of the Holl'd L'd Com'py in such manner and to such extent as they should be disposed to grant.

Should they be unwilling to make any considerable appropriation in money (which if made we would give such Security as should be required that it would be faithfully expended) We have to request that if constructed with our means and if hereafter on application, the Canal Commissioners and the Legislature should refuse us relief in case of our sustaining a loss, that in that case the Holl'd L'd Comp'y should assume such an equitable proportion of the loss as would be proportionate to their interest with ours, or to the benefits which they will derive from the accomplishment of so important an object.

We presume this will not be deemed an unreasonable request as a total loss would be ruinous to us and having only a small interest in it in common with other members of [this] Community.

We have deemed it needless to make this proposition to Mr. Ellicott, as we have been even refused the loan of a

pile driver which we understand he sometime since purchased for the *ostensible* purpose of making the proposed pier.

We hope and trust this proposition will be received favorably and that we shall be enabled to commence the work immediately, as the want of a Harbor is very sensibly felt both in the business of this place and in depreciation of Village property.

The business of loading and unloading Vessels over 30 Tons has for two seasons past been altogether done at Black Rock, which place is improving very rapidly.

As it is of the utmost importance that the works should be commenced soon, that they may be sufficiently advanced to be secure before the fall winds set in, we hope you will favor us with a reply as soon as possible.

We are very respectfully, Sir,

Your most ob't Serv'ts

(Signed) OLIV. FORWARD

" SAM'L WILKESON

" CHS. TOWNSEND

" GEO. COIT

P. S. Should the pile driver above mentioned belong to the Holl'd L'd Comp'y we should be much obliged to them for the loan of it and also for the privilege of Cutting on their land part of the timber and brush, should it be more convenient to the Workmen.

PAUL BUSTI, *Esq'r*,

Agent of the Holl'd L'd Company.

From a "copy of a letter from Messrs. Forward and others to P. Busti with his reply—from Joseph Ellicott," preserved with the Evans MSS.

AGENT BUSTI'S REPLY TO THE FOREGOING.

PHILADELPHIA, 11th May, 1820.

Messrs. OLIVER FORWARD & CONSORS, *Buffalo*.

GENTLEMEN: Your letter of 30th April conveying me a detailed account of what has passed concerning the project of Constructing works at the mouth of Buffalo Creek capa-

ble of affording shelter to vessels navigating the Erie [lake], terminates with a demand that in case the Legislature should refuse to grant you a relief for any loss to be sustained in the undertaking of that work, the risk of which you seem disposed to take upon yourselves, I should engage on the part of the Holld Ld Compy to refund an equitable proportion of such losses.

I regret Gentlemen to be under the obligation of declining taking any such engagement, or in any way a share in perfecting a work, the utility of which I am duly appreciating, and whose promotion has from all times been one of the wishes of my heart.

The apparent contradiction of these last words when compared to the flat refusal of running even the eventual risk of contributing a share in the losses that might be sustained requires on my part an explanation. I have to give it in the fond expectation that you will find my expressions perfectly reconcilable.

From the very moment the Territory of the Holld Compy was opened for Settlement my plans were formed and I have invariably adhered to them. My rule on the score of public works has been to aid and assist in their confection, whenever they should be undertaken under the authority of the Legislature and by the State. It was therefore that under the impression that the erection of an harbour at the outlet of Buffalo Creek would have been deemed a proper object for National enterprize, I had authorized Mr. Ellicott the local Agent, in case the State had assumed its confection, to devote and Contribute to it a liberal proportion of the ground of the Village lots. Ready at all times to give proofs to the State that Dutch aliens were deserving well of the public I acted likewise when the cutting of the Grand Canal was projected. The first offer I made, should the U. S. or that of New York undertake its completion, [was] a free grant of every alternate farm lot lying on both sides of a Canal passing through the Dutch property. To an incorporated Company the same grant was proposed, but with a condition that every acre of the Lands ceded should be valued and paid in Canal Shares.

I quote this fact in order to convince you of my constant practice of making a great discrimination between lending assistance to such kind of undertakings. When assumed by States and Governments the moral certainty that they will soon or late be completed gives me great encouragement. It is just the reverse with works undertaken by private associations. The failure of so many in which the Members composing the Holld Compy have sunk so much Capital in Your, as well as other States of America has made me once for all determine never to recede from the adopted System of refusing all kind of engagements with them. Consistency in acting is one of the qualities I pride myself to possess, and as Mr. Ellicott knows my way of thinking he is perfectly justified of every reproach it might be attempted to throw upon him on account of his having at one time hinted his willingness to contribute to the making of the harbour, and at another Shewn a contrary disposition. He has acted in unison with my principles. Therefore [if] there is any wrong done the blame must fall upon me.

I do not take upon me to excuse or condemn his refusal of lending the pile driver, you tell me, he had purchased. As in the Accounts of the Holld Compy no charge of such a machine was ever made it follows that [it] is no property upon which I am entitled to dispose. Mr. Ellicott is the master to do with the pile driver as he thinks fit. I believe him to be too reasonable as to deny to You the use of it on suitable terms.

I have the honor to remain

Your Obed't Serv't

Evans MSS.

PAUL BUSTI

APPREHENSIVE OF CANAL CHANGES.

GENESEO, December 25, 1820.

DEAR SIR: . . . In September next the Genese river becomes a section of the grand canal. The location of Rochester from that time becomes comparatively unim-

portant. Batavia for many years will seek the canal in Caledonia. Other villages more favored than Rochester, with a fertile back country, will grow up on the Genesee River. The intercourse among the inhabitants up and down the river will be daily. And a central location for the seat of justice will best accommodate the entire population. . . .

JAMES WADSWORTH

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esqr.*

Evans MSS.

CANAL INTERESTS AT ALBANY.

ALBANY, February 7, 1821.

DEAR UNCLE: The legislature yesterday elected Mr. Van Buren a senator in Congress in the place of Mr. Sanford whose term of service will expire on the 3d day of March.

The canal bill which passed the senate at the november meeting has this day passed in committee of the whole in the Assembly and will receive its third reading tomorrow.

I am waiting for the proofs to be furnished of the fair expenditure of the \$50000 appropriation to bring that affair before the senate and have little doubt to be able to procure the passage of a law to direct the comptroller to settle it.

His excellency has not yet commenced the new canal and when he will is quite uncertain. The city is overflowing with office seekers and their importunities are so incessant that I can scarcely steal a moment from them,—fifty will sometimes call in the course of a morning.

Doctor Prendergast wishes in case a new canal commissioner is to be appointed to become a candidate for the office and requested me to enquire whether you think him competent to discharge its duties if he should succeed in obtaining it, which I promised to do.

Yours affectionately

DAVID E. EVANS

[*Addressed to Joseph Ellicott, Esq., Batavia.*]

Evans MSS.

ALBANY, Feby 20, 1821.

DEAR UNCLE: The Bill for the erection of the County of Munroe passed in committee of the whole in the house of Assembly this day and will receive its third reading to-morrow and as the Council of Revision will meet on Friday will then become a law. The Livingston County is the order of the day for to-morrow and I have no doubt but what it will also pass but I think not by so large a majority—which was I have been told thirty five.

The legislature have not yet decided when to choose another canal commissioner—who will be appointed I am unable even to conjecture. There are many candidates.

Yours sincerely,

D. E. EVANS

[*Addressed to Joseph Ellicott, Esq., Batavia.*]

Evans MSS.

BUFFALO'S CLAIMS AS CANAL TERMINUS.

BUFFALO, June 25, 1821.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, *Esquire*.

SIR: The question as to the *termination* of the canal is daily assuming an increased importance with all those who favor its approaching the mouth of Buffalo creek, but with none more so than the citizens of this village and vicinity, We feel a very deep interest in this question and wish to unite all the influence in favor of this plan, that exists. It has always been understood that you, Sir, were friendly to our views on this subject. We believe, too, that some of the Canal Commissioners are with us. The question must be ultimately decided by them, and while it remains undecided, it would be desirable, that they could be made acquainted with the opinion of Gentlemen of learning and influence, who are in favor of this plan. Individually I feel a great anxiety on this subject, and which too has rather increased of late, from hearing that the Commission-

ers will not probably decide the matter untill it can be ascertained whether a harbour can be effected at the mouth of the creek. The experiment is now progressing with a prospect of success truly encouraging. As to its practicability we have not an infidel in the plan. The Gentlemen engaged in the work, have with aid furnished from the village turned the current of the creek across the *point* of land between the lake and creek in a direction towards the west end of the pier and are daming up the creek below. I understand the water is now from 10 to 12 feet deep across the point. By extending the rows of spoils [spiles], forming the dam, into the Lake (which work is now going on) so as to contract the channel of the creek between the pier & dam, the channel will be opened and we think *kept open* from the Creek into the Lake and it is hoped that it may be so far effected before the next return of the Steam Boat so as to admit her into the creek, as the captain declares he will come in as soon as the channel will admit him.¹

The funds appropriated for these improvements I fear will fall short of placing the works in that complete and permanent condition, necessary to answer the intended purpose. In addition to the Legislative appropriation, a subscription of about \$1000 has been obtained from Gentlemen of this village, some part of which however is payable in goods and other articles, such as shoes, &c,—the manufactures of the place—and in this way it will probably be further augmented. But our ability in this respect does not equal our disposition—other and more resources are wanted—as this is a work, the success of which will be of vast importance to all the owners of property in this vicinity, to the Holland Company as well as the residents. Would not, Sir, that company be willing to aid this work? That the com-

1. "The Steam Boat" referred to was the Walk-in-the-Water, the second steamboat on the Great Lakes, and the first above the Falls. Built at Black Rock in 1818, she sailed her first trip, to Detroit, Aug. 23d of that year. On account of the bar at the mouth of Buffalo creek, she made her eastern port at Black Rock, much to the chagrin of Buffalo. She was wrecked Nov. 1, 1821, on the beach, near the south pier of Buffalo's present harbor. For the history of the Walk-in-the-Water, with interesting reminiscences by one who was a passenger on her last trip, see Buffalo Historical Society Publications, vol. V.

pany will be greatly benefited by these improvements, in case the Canal shall in consequence thereof come into the creek, cannot escape the observation of any one. Those Gentlemen who live abroad and are owners of lots &c. in this village, must of course be very considerably interested in the success of these improvements, and I should suppose would cheerfully contribute something towards them.

I beg you will excuse the trouble I give you respecting this business. I have no private interest whatever to subserve save only a small subscription. But I acknowledge I feel a very deep interest in a public point of view, for I am satisfied that the decision of the canal commissioners as to the locality of the western extremity of the canal, is to be suspended, untill it can be ascertained whether we can have a harbour. Should this desirable state of things take place, it must be that men of business and men of capital will find many inducements for establishing themselves at this place, and the value of real property will rise in a ratio corresponding with the improvements and importance of the place, and in this way the interests of the Company and of all those who are the owners of land in this vicinity will be extensively promoted. Should they be convinced of this, I think they would not be unwilling to aid in some way the undertaking. Will you, Sir, have the goodness to write me on this subject. I am with great respect

Your obd Sert

Evans MSS.

H. B. POTTER.

BUFFALO VS. BLACK ROCK INTERESTS.

BUFFALO, Decr 7, 1821.

DEAR SIR: David Thomas Esquire has recently completed a survey of the canal from the Tonewanda Creek to this place, much to the dissatisfaction of the Messrs. Porters, who have a deep interest in terminating the canal at Black-Rock. Mr. Geddes one of the canal engineers, since the departure of Mr. Thomas, has appeared at Black-Rock, and is now employed in surveying the Niagara River, with

a view no doubt of inducing the canal commissioners to enter into the old, and as we supposed long since exploded project, of constructing a harbor by means of a *dam*, that is to raise the river to a level with the Lake.

Whether Mr. Geddes is employed by the canal commissioners or by the Messrs. Porters is to us unknown. We believe by the latter. Knowing that you must feel in common with us a great interest in the termination of the canal, we have thought proper to communicate to you these facts, and to advise with you as to the proper course to pursue. Please to inform us if you have any means of ascertaining the time that the question relative to the canal will be finally settled and determined; and whether in your opinion, it will under all circumstances be advisable for us to employ one or more intelligent men to go to Albany the ensuing winter, for the purpose of counteracting all misrepresentations that may be made to the commissioners, and of attending to our concerns generally before them. It is here reported and believed, that the commissioners will meet at Albany in the early part of the Session of the Legislature, and that they will then decide the point where the canal shall intersect the waters of the Lake—a question on which the future prosperity of this village entirely depends.

It is said that the Messrs. Porters, Barton & Thompson will be at Albany during the winter, with a view of using such influence as they may possess in favor of their own interest; and from the present excitement, which appears to have originated wholly at Black Rock, we are induced to believe that some or all of them will attend.

There is now full six feet water at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, and we shall have a channel of ten or eleven feet in the spring that will be entirely protected, and that will afford a safe, permanent & secure Harbor, for all vessels that now are, or may hereafter be employed in navigating the Lake.

We are Respectfully &c

OLIVER FORWARD
SAMUEL WILKESON

DAVID E. EVANS, *Esq.*

MORE OF THE SAME RIVALRY.

BUFFALO, Jan'y 9, 1822.

SIR: We enclose you one of [the] Black Rock pamphlets,¹ which on perusal you will discover a plausible mixture of truth & falshood artfully drawn up for the use of the Legislature.

This is only one among many means which Gen. P[orter] is resorting to to effect his object and which there is too much reason [to believe] will succeed in imposing on the State, unless suitable measures are devised to resist them. In doing which we much need your advise and assistance. Mr. Roberts who is attached to the canal commission has lately been employed as we believe by Gen'l P. to take surveys of the Buffalo & Black Rock Harbors with a view of reporting as to the expediency of discontinuing the further progress of the canal west of Black Rock. Roberts who we believe is a complete tool of Porter's openly advocates this measure—as well as the probability that two of the canal commissioners will not be reappointed viz. Mess. Clinton & Holley, which we think will be a ruinous measure to the Interests of this Village for it is not contemplated to substitute any person in their place. We think it is absolutely necessary to have a *correct survey* made of both Harbors and statements made placing the merits of both as they truly are. Cannot you make it convenient to come down and assist us.

1. For data regarding the "Black Rock Pamphlets," see Buffalo Historical Society Publications, vol. VI., pp. 556, 559, 561. The pamphlet attributed to Gen. Porter is entitled: "Documents, relating to the western termination of the Erie Canal; with explanations and remarks. Published by direction of 'The Black Rock Harbor Company.'" It was published at Black Rock in 1822. This and the pamphlet which it provoked in reply from the Buffalo Harbor Committee: "Documents and brief remarks in reply to the pamphlet written by General Porter," etc. (Buffalo, 1823), are among the scarcest of early local imprints.

Mr. Evans has been written to and we hope will meet you here. We fear nothing will be done unless you come.

Respectfully

Yr obt Sevts

WILKESON

CH: TOWNSEND

CYRENIUS CHAPIN

R. B. HEACOCK.

WM. PEACOCK, *Esq.*

P. S. Unless you feel prepared to submit to the termination of the canal at Black Rock we must rely on your coming down. We have just seen Roberts report which is erroneous in the extreme. Other facts have come to our knowledge which we cannot here state which induces us to believe Porter will succeed in his project.

Evans MSS.

FATE OF JUDGE WILKESON'S FIRST PIER.

ALBANY, March 20, 1822.

DEAR UNCLE: During the great freshet they have lately had the Buffalo Creek rose to an unusual height and undermined 250 feet of Wilkinson's [Wilkeson's] pier and tumbled it into the channel. It gouged out the sand to the depth of 18 feet and I am informed has formed a bar at the end of the pier in such a way that only 2-1/2 feet of water can be found any where on it. Wilkinson left here during my absence and returned on the same day that I did. I believe his principal business was to promote Col. Young's nomination he has had no apparent business and I have understood that he intended starting for home tomorrow.

Yours mo. affectionately

D. E. EVANS.

[Addressed to "Joseph Ellicott Esquire, Care of Wm Evans Esquire, Flour Inspector, Baltimore."]

Evans MSS.

JUDGE WILKESON WRITES FROM ALBANY.

ALBANY, 19th Feb. 1823.

D. E. EVANS, *Esq.*

DEAR SIR: You will probably have heard before this reaches you, that Calculations are making to reappoint the Canal Commission that is to proceed in their appointments, as in that of other offices & Considering their offices as vacant it will of course produce less feeling to leave out those who the[y] wish to dispose of than it would to vote them out and from present appearances it is pretty certain that Holley Clinton & Vanransalier [Van Rensselaer] will be removed in that way when perhaps neither could be removed direct.

The citizens of Troy are induced to go into the measure in hopes to get *rid* of the Albany interest in the board the[y] are pressing their claims for a different arrangement and location in the vicinity of their city. Gen. Porters friends are equally anxious to dispose of the members of the board who are oposed to their projects, all economy members are made to believe three commissioners are enough & the peoples money must be saved, some others are induced to believe that unfair speculations have been made by Holley and he ought to be removed others say that no man ought to be left in office who has oposed the prevailing party this class altho not the majority are not a few, uniting those who are actuated by various motives. I have no doubt but the[y] will have the power and disposition to exercise it & that Holly, Clinton & Vanranslaer will be removed unless some efforts are made to sustain them. I called on Mr. Norton requesting him to write you his opinion of the absolute necessity of your presence here at this time he has informed me that you have been wrote to and advised to attend here on other business, and that you would no doubt be here immediately, he agrees with me in the course that the Canal Commisioners business will take unless you Can save it in fact I am so well persuaded myself that I can be of no service myself in sustaining them, that is by di-

rectly remonstrating with members that I can not attempt it. was you here I could do a great deal I have found means to do something by our friends but if the Commissioners are preserved you must do it. Porter can not induce the legislature to recognize his projects, at least I have no fears in that Quarter. I have been more fortunate than I could have expected in inlisting various strong interests against him that altho it might not be prudent to attempt the repeal of his law I am clear he cannot at present induce the hous to Grant him any thing further but if one half the board is struck of, we have everything to aprehend and it will be done unless you Can prevent it I am not alarmed without caus I have satisfyd myself of what various feelings exist and to what Extent. a notice was given yesterday by Dudley that he would bring in a bill to apoint Canal Commissioners altho he did not think what he was doing. he has since been informed & hereafter will be Quiet, but others will be found to pursue it I hope you will sett aside your business & be here without losing one moment I do believe Every thing depends on your presence & unless you Can come I am satisfyd I may as well go home as stay, as I can not do anything Equal to what will be necessary to sustain the board. Redfield is so Cautious I can do nothing with him. I have recd from Buffalo a chart of the lower end of the lake including Porters harbor &c it goes to show that he has in his chart intendid a most ridiculous imposition I have ours—now in the hands of the Engravers will be finished on Saterdag I will send your friends a copy. I am also procuring a chart of Lake Erie to shew the General Com. which will also shew Ps tricks, the whole expense will be \$67.50 I yet do not know where the money will come from to defray Expenses I beg of you to Come down the next stage after you receive this I recd a bill of you \$10 which is said to be spurious it is on the N. Y. Phenix bank which I will enclose you as you may recollect where you recd it.

Sir, your friend

S. WILKESON

AS TO WATER SUPPLY FOR THE CANAL.

(Private)

MAYVIL, June 30th, 1823.

HEMAN B. POTTER, *Esqr.**Buffalo.*

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the date of the 27th Inst. was duly received, and from it has put beyond rumour the extraordinary and unexpected decision of the canal board, a decision, that I cannot account for in any reasonable way; when I know, and every other person knows, that has thought upon the subject, that the only thing necessary for a permanent supply of water in the Canal was to make Lake Erie the Reservoir,—and I do believe that nature never formed a more complete one, and one on a grander scale, therefore all that is necessary to be done is to take the easy and natural course to effect the great object, which is to extend the canal to Buffalo Cr[ee]k & the supply of water is obtained, but on the other hand, in daming up the water of Niagara river & forming an artificial reservoir, attended with an enormous expense and great risk, & no more advantage of the water is obtained than what is had from taking the supply of water out of the natural Reservoir at Buffalo Creek, unattended with far less expense, and no risk; these considerations alone (without mentioning many others) ought to have had a paramount weight on the decision of the canal board. Would it not be the most prudent and safe course for the canal board to pursue, to have the canal *first* made and completed to Buffalo Creek? I should certainly say so. When the canal *is* to run to Buffalo at all events, it would show a sound and prudent course, because, if it was found to answer the great purpose intended (and there is not the least doubt but that it will) it would supersede the necessity of making that great expenditure of Money in daming up the Niagara. . . .

I am most Respectfully

Your obt ser't

WILLIAM PEACOCK.

MR. ELLICOTT ADVISES THE COMMISSIONERS REGARDING
BUFFALO HARBOR.

BATAVIA, 16th July, 1824.

To the honorable BOARD OF CANAL COMMISSIONERS.

GENTLEMEN: Having seen announced, through the medium of the public prints, a resolution of your board, that you have it in contemplation to terminate the grand canal at a basin or harbor, to be formed in Niagara river, by means of a mole or pier, upwards of two miles below the out let of Lake Erie, and probably four miles from Buffalo creek, the original destination of its termination, and have assigned the 21st instant, for a meeting of your board, for your final decision on this question: In consequence, I take the liberty of addressing a communication to you on that subject; believing that the project of constructing an harbor at the site you propose, will be attended with more than treble the *expense*¹ of that of continuing the canal to Buffalo creek, where it unites with the still water of the lake; and believing also, when such a harbor as you have designated, shall be accomplished, that it will not afford the facilities to vessels, communicating with the canal, in relation to their free ingress and regress, with the navigation of the lake, as a harbor uniting with, or formed out of the still water of the lake would, on account of the fact, that vessels lying in the lake, one mile from its outlet, near the American shore, are propelled against the strength of current, by the gentle

1. "NOTE.—In stating that the mole, or pier, will cost more than treble the sum that would be required to excavate the canal to Buffalo creek, we need only advert to the fact, that the solid contents of the mole, or pier, would be equal to more than two miles of the averaged solid contents of the area of the cavity of the canal; and I presume there are few practical men but will agree, that an area of six square yards, excavated from the canal, (averaged) may be performed in less time by one man, than one man could prepare and convey, of such materials as would answer to form a pier in the Niagara river to the contemplated site, a sufficiency of one square yard of such pier. Indeed, I shall not hesitate to say, that the erection of such a pier as the one proposed, would be attended with at least, if not more expense, than one-fourth part of that of the whole excavation through the Mountain Ridge at Lockport. Hence, if the additional money over and above the sum, (more than \$12,000), than it would cost to excavate the canal to Buffalo, is to be furnished by individual means in the construction of this pier, there is little probability of the canal navigation being extended to Lake Erie at an early period."—*Note by Joseph Ellicott.*

land breeze, which, during calm weather, in summer, sets almost every night from off the land, on the lake; whereas, vessels lying within any distance, much less than one mile from the outlet, derive no advantage from this wind, inasmuch as the strength of current, occasioned by the strong suck of the outlet, is too great for such gentle winds to propel vessels against it, as well as that the land towards, and at the outlet of the lake, and for some distance down the outlet, becomes so elevated, as to prevent vessels from any participation with the land breeze.

The idea of a breeze setting off the land, upon the lake, during calm summer nights, may, by some, be considered visionary, and of little, or not any importance, as it relates to fixing on the most proper site for a harbor, communicating with the western termination of the Erie canal. But, trivial as it may seem, it is an object of immense magnitude, in facilitating the departure of vessels up the lake. This land breeze will frequently enable vessels lying at Buffalo creek, to depart therefrom, and sail to the upper or west end of the lake, and return to Buffalo, before a vessel could leave any harbor at or below the outlet of the lake, unless towed up to the still water, by some force or power other than of wind—as well as, that south and south-east winds are fair to sail from Buffalo, while they are head winds at Black Rock.

And believing, that if it is contemplated by the commissioners, that the harbor they propose forming in the Niagara river, by means of a mole or pier, and embankment of Squaw Island, shall constitute part of the continuation of the canal to Buffalo creek, that it will frequently be extremely prejudicial to those using the canal, inasmuch as, during strong gales, which often blow down the lake for many days successively, that the surf in the upper part of the river, or mole harbor, would be so much agitated, that canal boats could not pass between the pier and shore with safety, to the commencement of the canal leading to Buffalo; hence, they would, of necessity, have to remain, during that period, in the lower harbor, or unload their freight in store, while the vessels destined to ship their cargoes,

were lying at Buffalo on detention, thereby losing time, and incurring expense; whereas, in case the canal was continued to Buffalo, the boats would pass to the place of destination and discharge their loading immediately aboard the vessel destined to receive it, which might then make sail, and arrive at its destination, before a canal boat could pass to Buffalo, through the harbor to be formed by a mole or pier, in Niagara river.

When it is taken into view, that this contemplated harbor can be considered no other than an experiment, and that every day's experience teaches that experiments which seem most rational, often turn out in disappointment, and not to answer the purpose of their projectors, it would seem that an object so momentous, as that of facilitating transportation by means of a canal, through the great lakes, at an expenditure of millions, would have been so determined on, as to have left nothing to depend upon the uncertainty of experiment, when a certainty is at hand, and that can be accomplished at so much less expense, and with so much more advantage to the public.

Should the commissioners, however, not be disposed to change their opinion of the plan they have proposed for a harbor in the Niagara river, in which to terminate the canal, I would suggest to the honorable board, the propriety of locating, along that part of the shore of the Niagara river, contiguous to, and adjoining the harbor proposed to be used in lieu of a canal, a site for a canal, to be appropriated for that, and no other purpose, which, when excavated, would continue the canal uninterrupted to Buffalo. This would be only a precautionary measure, guarding against casualties which doubtless will attend the experiment harbor; and no doubt rests in my mind, that the necessity of the case would render it requisite, that this part of the canal so located, should be immediately excavated, and thereby continue the canal uninterruptedly to Buffalo, as originally designed.

Which is respectfully submitted by

The commissioners' obedient servant,

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

IN BEHALF OF THE BUFFALO TERMINUS.

BATAVIA, March 2d, 1825.

DEAR SIR: I have for some time past contemplated writing you on the subject of continuing the canal directly to Buffalo independent of the Black Rock harbor. A considerable degree of apprehension pervades all this section of the country, and in the neighborhood of the canal in the counties of Niagara and Orleans it exists much more extensively that the supply of water may and at times will be cut off by breaches being made in the works at Black Rock.

By information which I have latterly obtained and on which I place the most implicit reliance, it seems that a sand bar is rapidly forming at the head of the Black Rock basin, a circumstance which was anticipated by many. The immense quantity of sand between the mouth of Buffalo creek and Black Rock is by every northerly gale driven down stream and when the current is stopped between Bird Island and the American shore it is evident that the same will when it reaches still water, and is removed below the action of the heavy swells of the Lake deposit and become stationary. Before the erection of the pier and the temporary dam (the latter of which was swept off by a late gale) the current of the river was sufficiently strong to take off the sand which the waves of the lake washed into it. This has been thus far one of the mildest winters ever known but notwithstanding, I am informed, the ice is 20 feet thick within the pier at the Rock.

The late report of the commissioners on this subject I think displays more testiness than talent and this perhaps may be accounted for by the shortness of the time allowed them to make it in, and in point of fact they are in some cases incorrect—as for instance in stating that independent of the waters of Lake Erie there was a sufficient supply last season to feed the canal from Genesee River to Black Rock. It is however a positive fact that there was not a sufficient supply to enable Boats with full loads to get to Lock port, and to get there with boats only partially loaded it was necessary to raise the waters west of Oak Orchard

creek by hoisting the safety gate east of the feeder to prevent the waters discharged by the feeder from passing to the eastward. I was there in October and the water was not more than 20 inches deep at the east side of the gate after it had been hoisted to raise the water between it and Lock port. It is to be observed that there is a descent in the canal between Lock port and Rochester and that consequently it requires a greater quantity of water to supply it than it would if it were level.

To establish a towing path along the margin of the basin at Black Rock, for any useful purpose, really seems to me to be as impracticable as it would along the Quay at Albany. The space left for it will be constantly crossed, during the season of active business with boxes, barrels &c in such a way as effectually to obstruct the passage of a horse with a towing line attached to him. I say this from the belief that no one supposes the idea of the *projecting store houses* is ever to be carried into effect.

What advantages the commissioners could ever see in the Black Rock project I have not been able to discover and am free to say that my belief is it was intended more to promote the private interests of a political friend than the general good of the people at large.

As far as I can learn the sentiments of the inhabitants of the western parts of the State they are in favor of continuing the canal to Buffalo creek without entering the Niagara River at all. Those immediately interested at Black Rock and a few individuals along the Niagara who are still disposed to look up to General Porter as their political chief are of course exceptions.

It has been the misfortune of our party for the last year to have pursued an unpopular course of measures and if our friends in the senate reject the Bill which has passed the assembly for continuing the canal along the margin of the Niagara to Buffalo it will have a tendency and a strong one to add to the discontent which, it is no secret, prevails at present in the western part of the State.

General Porters conduct during the late presidential election has fully proved that he is not a disinterested politician

and that he is willing to sacrifice his party to the advancement of his own interest. How far the Republicans in the Senate are disposed to go in sustaining measures adopted in the first instance to aid him in his schemes for enhancing the value of his private property and in opposition to the opinions and wishes of the great body of the people I am unable to say. I however trust not far, and sincerely hope that the bill that has passed the Assembly may also pass the senate and thereby put this unpleasant question at rest, which has long kept and will continue to keep the inhabitants of the county of Erie in an uproar and be made to bear upon the election greatly to our disadvantage until it is finally decided.

With sentiments of sincere regard I remain dear Sir,
Your ob. sert.

DAVID E. EVANS.

P. S. Mr. Mix has business at Erie and Niagara Counties that will require his attention there and I have requested him to call at Black Rock and ascertain the true state of things there. His report may be expected in three or four days—when this letter was written it was too late to get it off by the mail of yesterday. [March 3, 1825.]

Hon. H. I. REDFIELD.

Evans MSS. The outside address of the above letter is: "Heman I. Redfield (Post Master Le Roy), Senate Chamber, Albany, N. Y."

CONTRACTS FOR CANAL WORK IN BUFFALO.

Articles of Agreement made this thirtieth day of April in the year one thousand eight hundred & twenty five between William Peacock of Mayville of the first part, and John G. Camp of Buffalo of the second part, Witnesseth:

That the said John G. Camp doth covenant and agree to & with the said William that he will excavate a canal com-

mencing on the dividing line between the lands of the said William & Benjamin Ellicott in the village of Buffalo at the point of intersection of those lands by the State Canal and thence running easterly towards Cazenovia Terrace four hundred & thirty eight feet in length, and in width at bottom thirty feet and at top forty feet, and to timber the same so as to leave the bottom twenty eight feet in the clear, all the timber above low water mark to be hewn on three sides—to be at least one foot square and below low water mark to be hewn on two sides—to put not less than two ties in each piece of timber, not less than three feet in length—the two top tiers to have ties not less than three feet apart of ten feet in length—all the ties to be dove tailed—all the timbers above low water mark to be of good white pine or white oak and the ties of the same—the timber work to be in height ten feet—the whole of the said canal to be cut, made and excavated to the same level and depth as the State Canal. The whole work to be completed and finished in a good, substantial like manner during the present season that is to say, by the first day of October next, the earth excavated is to be deposited, one half on each side of the said canal at a suitable distance therefrom, at the intersection of the said canal with the said State Canal, the corners are to be cut off and timbered up in the same manner as the said canal, agreeable to the diagram hereunto annexed.

In consideration of which said covenant & agreement on the part of the said John G. Camp to be performed as above, the said William doth hereby covenant and agree to & with the said John G. that he will well & truly pay or cause to be paid unto the said John G. the sum of one thousand six hundred & four dollars & forty cents, the one half thereof to be paid when the said work shall be half completed and the residue thereof to be paid on the entire completion of the whole work—and he the said William doth further covenant and agree to & with the said John G. that he will lay out the ground or cause the same to be laid out, so as to enable the said John G. to commence the said work, on or before the first day of June next. In witness

whereof the said parties have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year above written.

WILLIAM PEACOCK
JOHN G. CAMP

Sealed & Delivered
in presence of
H. B. POTTER

[Endorsements on back:]

Rec'd Sepr 16th 1825 three hundred & twenty dollars.
J. G. CAMP

Rec'd on 6th Augt 1825 from H. B. Potter, Esq., two hundred twenty eight dollars thirty-two cents for which I then gave my rec't.

Rec'd Oct. 19th, from H. B. Potter Esq. one thousand fifty six dollars & eight cents all to apply on the within contract.
JNO. G. CAMP.

Rec'd Dec. 2nd from H. B. Potter Esq. one hundred twenty six dollars 82 cents in full of the within contract & also in full of all demands.
J. G. CAMP.

	1604.40
228.32	
320.00	
<hr/>	548.32
	<hr/>
	1056.08

[Wm Peacock &
John G. Camp's
Canal Contract
April 30, 1825.]

Evans MSS.

SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRACT.

Articles of Agreement made this fifteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty five between William Peacock of Mayville of the

first part and John G. Camp of Buffalo of the second part, witnesseth:

That the said John G. doth covenant and agree to & with the said William that he will excavate a canal of about forty feet on the eastern end of the canal mentioned in the contract between the said parties of the 30th of April last and in extension of the said canal, of the same width, depth and heighth and to be finished in the same manner in every respect as the aforesaid canal and with the like materials. This additional canal to be completed & finished in a good, substantial like manner by the fifteenth day of November next or sooner, weather and the elements permitting. And the said John G. further agrees to & with said Peacock to fill up level with the top of the earth the slip or hole of sixty feet east of and adjoining to the said forty feet by the time of the completion of the said forty feet.

In consideration whereof the said William doth covenant and agree to and with the said John G. that he will well and truly pay unto the said John G. the sum of five hundred & twelve dollars and thirty-two cents to be paid on the entire completion of the above mentioned work.

It is understood that the timbers are to be put into & across the eastern end of the said forty feet, by the said John G.—and it is also understood that the excavation of the said forty feet is now nearly completed. Witness our hands and seals the day and year above written.

WILLIAM PEACOCK
JNO G. CAMP

Sealed & Delivered
in presence of
H. B. POTTER

[Endorsement]

Rec'd November 29th, 1825, of William Peacock Five hundred & twelve dollars and thirty-two cents, being the Amount in full of all demands on the within contract.

\$512.32.

JNO G. CAMP

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